H. L. Vail
Litchfield
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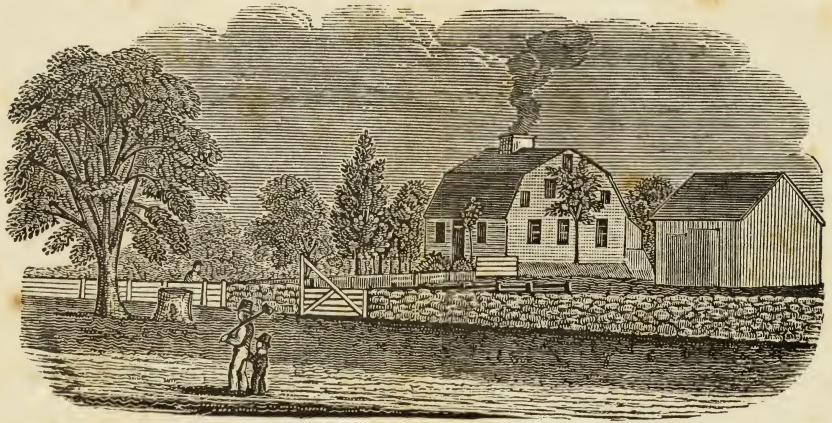

"That humble dwelling was the abode of domestic peace — of intelligence — of cheerfulness — of piety and of hospitality. A stranger could not pass a night in this Christian family without feeling that religion casts a loveliness over the domestic circle, and that the sweetest joys of earthly friendship are shared in the family."—PAGE 55.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

REV. JOSEPH VAILL,

LATE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HADLYME.

BY REV. ISAAC PARSONS,
Pastor of the Church of Christ in East-Haddam.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."---Rev. ii, 10.

NEW YORK.
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PREFACE.

The characters of men remain behind them after they have left the world. The good and faithful may continue to do good by their example and moral influence beyond the period of their mortal lives and after they have gone to their reward.

It is with a view to perpetuate the example and influence of a laborious and faithful minister of the Gospel, that the following Memoir is given to the public. It has not been the design of the compiler, to furnish a biographical sketch to attract the admiration of readers, nor to accord with the taste of the age, in requiring that which is wonderful and uncommon and marvellous in a memoir; but it has been his design to present the subject of the following memoir in a true light—to exhibit him just as he was in his life, in plain narrative, without embellishments of style or figures of rhetoric.

He has not entered on this service, without the solicitation of friends, nor without the advice of Ministerial Brethren. The impression was extensive among the numerous friends and acquaintances of Mr. Vaill, after his decease, that a brief memoir of his life would be useful to the cause of Christ, and that some record of his faithful services, and ministerial and Christian graces should be preserved for the benefit of the living. How far the compiler has succeeded in this humble attempt to give a true portraiture of the character of this beloved

and venerable minister of Christ, he leaves it to the reader to say.

He commits the volume to the Providence of God, and submits it to an impartial Christian public, with hope and with prayer to God, that so far as read, it will perpetuate the example of this faithful servant of the Lord, for the encouragement of Christians and Christian ministers in duty, and awaken interest in all classes of readers in the concerns of salvation, and thus prove instrumental in advancing the interests of true religion in the world.

THE COMPILER.

East Haddam, August 14th, 1839.

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MEMOIR

CHAPTER I.

His parentage. Birth. Early education. Manner of life up to the age of twenty-one years. Dealings of God with him during this period.

The Rev. Joseph Vaill, the subject of the following memoir, was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, July 14th 1751. His father, Mr. Joseph Vaill, was the son of Mr. Daniel Vaill, who resided at Southold, on Long Island. His mother, Jerusha Vaill, was the daughter of Mr. William Peck, who removed from Hartford to Litchfield, at an early period in the settlement of that town.

His parents were both members of the Congregational church in Litchfield. As visible believers, they were upright, and consistent in their walk, and respectable in their standing in society. They early instructed their child-

ren in the truths of religion, and taught them by precept and example, to respect the word and worship of God. Joseph was their eldest son. His childhood and youth were passed under the parental roof. The advantages for early education at that period, were inconsiderable in comparison with those of the present time. Those of the common school and of the family were all that this son enjoyed, until he attained to the age of twenty-one years. He was a sober and obedient child, and an industrious and moral youth. His parents calculated on his remaining with them after he should become of lawful age to act for himself; and that, as he had been brought up to labor on a farm, he would follow the occupation of farming as his chosen employment for life. But Providence had designs in regard to this son which were not, at that time, made known to his parents, which would disappoint their expectations in a manner afflictive to them, at first; — yet in which they acquiesced; — and they were permitted to live to see their son conducted in a way in life very different from that which they had marked out for him.

The following sketches of his early history, and of the influence of religious truth in his experience in early life, are from a manuscript written by himself in the latter part of his life.

The manuscript is entitled "SOME ACCOUNT OF MY EARLY LIFE AND OF THE DEALINGS OF GOD WITH ME."

"I was early taught to read, and sent to school, in the summer, to a female teacher when about four years of age, and to a male teacher in the fall and winter, until I was fourteen or fifteen years of age. But, in consequence of the want of suitable skill and management of school teachers in general of that day, and my inclination to play, I gained but an incorrect knowledge of several branches of learning to what I ought to have gained in that period. I was, however, viewed as good a reader and speller as almost any one of my standing.

"I early experienced serious impressions of the Divine Spirit at times, and especially when I heard some awakening discourse. I well remember the tender and anxious feelings which were produced in my mind when not more than five years of age by the solemn and affecting address of a pious school-mistress, on the proceedings of the judgment of the last day, as recorded in the latter part of the twenty-fifth Chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

"By means of early religious instruction and tenderness of conscience, I was kept back from many of those vices which were common to some of my playmates — such as quarrelling,

lying, calling wicked names, and especially from profane swearing. When I was about the age of seven or eight years, I was much affected when any person of my acquaintance died, and I underwent many fearful apprehensions in view of death, lest I should die in my unprepared condition, and be forever miserable. I was often, in sleep, greatly alarmed by frightful dreams about death, and the world's coming to an end, and the scenes of the judgment day, and I awoke at times, in great bitterness of spirit, and attempted to pray, and continued distressed for a few hours, and then my fears would subside for the time. The same was true in sickness; and whenever my health was impaired, I felt alarmed lest I should die. There was in my mind, from very early life, a great natural dread of death, aside from my conscious unpreparedness for death."

"My mind was more or less exercised from year to year, until I grew to a state of manhood; and I had many seasons of seriousness in which I read the Bible and other religious Books, and attempted to pray frequently. In some of these seasons I began to indulge hope that I had reformed my life, and that I loved religious duties, and was about setting out in earnest for the kingdom of heaven; yet afterwards, being led to associate with loose com-

panions, I was left to grieve away the Spirit, and soon returned to my former careless course of life. I have often thought that if I had lived when there was a season of awakening and revival of religion, and had told my exercises to others, they would have numbered me among the hopeful converts. And from my long acquaintance and experience in such seasons, I have witnessed many such superficial conversions, which prove as did several of mine, like the morning cloud, and early dew, which vanish before the sun.

"For a part of the time, when I was from fourteen to twenty years of age, I fell into a criminal abuse of the Sabbath, by indulging in levity of behavior, and unbecoming conversation in going to the place of worship, and in the intermission, by mingling in company with light and vain youth. Though my conscience frequently reproved me for thus profaning this sacred day, and I often, on the morning of the Sabbath, resolved that I would be upon my guard against this sin which so easily beset me, yet when I came to meet my light companions, I was wont to break over my resolutions. As I had been instructed from early life, in the necessity of a change of heart, and had read accounts of revivals of religion, I grew up with a fixed belief, that unless I should be converted,

I must perish forever. This thought caused in me, fearful apprehensions of dying and going to judgment in an unconverted state. I was greatly alarmed in time of a thunder storm; as I feared I should be struck dead by the lightning and sent to hell in a moment. The illumination of the heavens by remarkable northern lights, at that period struck me with terror, lest it should be a token that the conflagration of the world was about to follow; and under this impression, I was induced to pray and to alter my sinful course for a time. When about seventeen years of age, I was alarmed by the sudden surprising death of one of my intimate acquaintance, who was instantly killed by a loaded cart's passing over his body. He had been such an irreligious and profane youth, that I feared he had gone to hell. This awful Providence excited me to a more diligent attention to the concerns of my own soul. I prayed more and read the Scriptures more diligently; and thought more on religious subjects for a number of weeks. But I gradually lost the impressions of this Providence, and relapsed into my former impenitent course.

"I frequently lotted out, in my mind, to be more happy in some future period of my life, by obtaining wealth, or by settling in the world; —but the thought that I should be a miserable

creature, should I continue destitute of religion, would at once, destroy all my anticipated happiness.

"When I was about twenty years of age, being confined by lameness for a considerable time, I attended diligently to reading the Bible, and other religious books, and betook myself more constantly to secret prayer, and drew up a number of resolutions to devote my life to the service of Christ. About this time, I began to think of attempting to gain an education with a view of being qualified for the Gospel ministry. But my resolutions were made in my own strength; and I yielded to temptation, and lost, in a measure my serious impressions. Thus I lived in an unsettled and undecided state of mind, and found myself to increase in hardness of heart; for in many respects, what would greatly affect me, when in younger life, would now have little or no impression on my mind, though I believe my concern for my soul became more rational than formerly.

"Before I set out to procure a College education, my inclination to join young people in their amusements and parties of pleasure grew less, until I wholly forsook their vain amusements. But during all this time, I had but a little sense of the totally depraved state, and desperate wickedness of my heart, and of my

inability to help or save myself. As the Spirit of God continued to strive with me, notwithstanding all my relapses, broken resolutions and aggravated abuses of God's forbearing mercy, I lived an uncomfortable life. I was not happy in the things of the world, nor was my conscience at ease."

The reader has now seen the subject of this memoir passing on in life, under a religious early education, and the strivings of God's Spirit, to the age of twenty-one years, without gaining any satisfactory evidence that he was a child of God. The temptations which assail young people are essentially the same in every age. The influence of irreligious companions proved to him a temptation to violate the Sabbath. Children should be early taught to avoid the influence, and to shun the example of such as have no respect for the Sabbath, nor serious concern for their own salvation.

CHAPTER II.

Plan for obtaining an education. Difficulties in entering on it. Leaves home for Dartmouth College. His journey. Safe arrival. Description of the place. Finds Mr. J. O. Begins to labor. Commences the study of Latin. Privations and hardships. Enters College. Continues to reside at the Mills and labor. Recites regularly with his class in College. Whole period of his residence at the Mills. Account of his religious state. Joins the College Church.

"SOMETIME in the month of June 1772, a plan was proposed by Mr. J. O., who had removed the preceding year, into the neighborhood of Dartmouth College, for several young men to procure a College education, and to defray their expenses, by tending a saw-mill and grist-mill, the property of the College, which he had taken to run on shares. A brother of Mr. O. had before this, become a member of Dartmouth College. I had been thinking of a public education for some time, and had been desirous of obtaining one; but no way seemed to be open to me for it. Two of my acquaintance concluded to make trial of Mr. O's plan, and I felt inclined to join them in this new and arduous

enterprize. But numerous and seemingly insurmountable difficulties lay in the way: As my father was considerably advanced in life, (turned of fifty) and had no other son except one who was then an infant about six months old, and had involved himself in debt to a considerable amount, for the purchase of a suitable settlement for me that I might live near to him. He had seven daughters, most of whom were dependent on him; and on learning my plan to leave home for the purpose of acquiring an education, my parents started such strong objections, that I felt it to be my duty, at first, to give it up. Still the subject was on my mind continually through the summer, and I was not satisfied to abandon it. At length, I signified by letter, to Mr. J. O., my desire to go and pursue his proposed plan, and received an answer from him in the forepart of September, which fixed my determination to go forward. My father offered me one half of his property, if I would relinquish the idea of leaving him, and remain on the farm; but I replied that I had rather give up my claims to any part of his estate than not go. My friends, in general, regarded it as a visionary and wild undertaking which would soon be given up in despair; and dissuaded me all in their power.

"My father told me that, as I was of age, he

had no legal right to control me, and should leave me to do as I thought best. He did not refuse to assist me so far as he was able; yet he was not in circumstances to afford me much pecuniary aid. Having made the best preparation I could under my circumstances, I set out, with three others, for Dartmouth College, Sept. 28th, 1772. I took my axe with me, and such articles of clothing and a few such books as were most necessary.

"Four of us started in company, taking one small horse with us, on which the youngest and most feeble of our company rode most of the way. Three of us travelled on foot, and for part of two days, each footman swung his pack, soldier-like. But, at length we contrived to place our packs on our horse. The distance we were to travel was computed to be one hundred and eighty miles. I had only about fifteen shillings in money in my pocket to bear my expenses on the journey; and as this proved insufficient, I received some more from one of our company. We travelled, on an average, about thirty miles a day. I had never before been twenty miles from home, nor gone on foot a whole day at a time. I became excessively weary, and at times almost ready to lie down in the street. On the third day, as we went from Hartford, on the east side of Connecticut

River, we reached the Chickopee River in Massachusetts; and finding the bridge gone, three of us forded this river. One rode the horse over, and ascertained that it was not dangerous, on account of its depth. We pulled off our stockings and shoes, and waded across, a distance of about ten rods. The water was cold, the stream rapid, and the bottom covered with sharp and slippery stones. We reached Claremont, in New Hampshire, on Saturday night, and put up at a small tavern, over the Sabbath, on the beach of Sugar River. The Landlord was an Episcopalian. A meeting was held at his house on the Sabbath. On Monday, Oct. 5th, we reached the College Mills.

"The Mills were one mile south from the College. They stood on a large brook, and near to them, was an interval of fifteen or twenty acres of land, which interval was nearly surrounded on one side by a high hill of a semicircular form, which extended from North East, to South West. This hill was thickly covered with forest trees. The road from the Mills to the College, after about sixty rods of level land, passed directly up this hill which was about one fourth of a mile from the bottom to the top, and thence through a hemlock swamp, nearly half a mile in width, before it reached the plain on which the College stood.

"We found Mr. J. O., living alone in a small framed unfinished house, which had been built for the residence of the man who should tend the College Mills. A more solitary and romantic situation can seldom be found. The howling of wild beasts, and the plaintive notes of the owl, greatly added to the gloominess of the night season. Mr. O., was supplied with some provisions and utensils, sufficient for one who lived in his solitary condition. His lodging was a box made of boards, called a bunk, with a ticken filled with pine shavings, and a sufficient covering of Indian blankets. For the first week we strangers took each one a blanket and slept upon the floor; — but in a short time we furnished ourselves with bunks and straw beds, and with utensils sufficient to take our meals in a more decent manner.

"The first four or five weeks we spent in tending the mills, and in clearing away the trees near our house, which furnished a supply of fuel for the winter. One of our company soon gave up the idea of studying, and returned to Connecticut before winter. Three of us now entered on the study of the Latin Grammar, and continued to pursue our studies through the winter. Our tutor was a brother of Mr. J. O., who was a member of the Sophomore Class in College. We gave him his board for his ser-

vice in teaching us; — and we had no other instructor till we entered College. During the first winter, we studied in our cold house, and used pine knots to burn for lights, instead of candles, for a part of the time. I lodged in the chamber, with one of my class-mates. We ascended a ladder placed in our small entry. My pillow was a duffed great coat, and our covering narrow Indian blankets. We did our own cooking and washing until the latter part of March, when a young married couple came from Connecticut, and lived in our house, and superintended our domestic concerns. Having repaired a small cottage near by, built in part of logs, we removed into that to study and lodge, where we remained during the next summer, suffering many inconveniences, and undergoing many privations.

"On the return of spring in 1773, as soon as the ice dissolved, we resumed our sawing. We sawed about sixty thousand feet of pine boards, and *stuck* them up. We also tended the grist mill in our turns. We had one dollar per thousand for sawing and stacking the boards, and half the toll for grinding. We also burned over several acres of ground, and cleared them for tillage, — we sowed a part with clover seed for mowing and pasture, and planted yearly about one acre of corn, besides our garden.

Our corn-field was never plowed. We employed our hoes in planting the corn, and we dug our field when the corn was up, with our hoes. The first spring after we commenced our settlement there, the *measles* broke out in our family, and proved fatal in the case of one of our number, who was thrown into a quick consumption, which terminated his life in about six weeks. This was an afflictive Providence to us all.

"In the first summer, we built a new convenient house. One of our number and myself constructed the chimney; and for want of cattle, we backed the stones from several rods distance. The mantle-tree stone, two of us carried on our shoulders nearly a mile; and the jamb-stones, we backed some distance. By the time we had finished our house, which was in September, my health was very much reduced; and I experienced a severe attack of the dysentery, attended with a burning fever; and for several days, my life was greatly threatened. But through a merciful Providence, I was at length restored to health. Thus, I continued to labor and study for two years, before I, with one of the company, entered College. My hardships were excessive, and especially in the spring, when, after studying through the winter, we turned out in the latter part of March, two

of us at a time, and tended the saw-mill for about six weeks together. In the second spring we sawed about seventy thousand feet of boards; and in the third about ninety thousand. We made it our rule to saw every evening, except Saturday and Sabbath evenings, till ten o'clock, and in the mean time, some one, in his turn, tended the grist-mill.

"About two years after we began our enterprise, two young men from Massachusetts joined us, one of whom brought on an excellent cow, which furnished us with milk and butter for most of the year, and greatly contributed to our living more comfortably.

"After I entered college, I went twice a day to recite with my class in College, which made me four miles travel each day. We recited to our Tutor immediately after morning prayers, and again at eleven o'clock; and some part of the time we had three recitations in a day. In the winter, we rose frequently at five o'clock, and in the shortest days at six o'clock, and having united in morning prayer in our family, I set off for College, having to face the North West wind, which was cold and piercing in that climate; and not unfrequently, I had to break my path through a new fall of snow, a foot in depth or more. Considering the severity of the winters in that cold region, it was marvel-

ous that I did not freeze my limbs, or perish with the cold, especially as I was but thinly clothed for that climate. After my admission to College, I tended the saw-mill about six weeks in the spring, which was chiefly vacation; and in summer, in addition to going to College twice or three times a day, I made it my rule to labor about three hours in the field or garden, or some other kind of manual labor. I had scarcely a moment's leisure from one day, week and month to another. My hardships were excessive, and especially in the Spring, in tending the saw-mill. I was frequently exposed to being drenched with water when mending the trough or buckets of the water-wheel; and in one instance, I experienced a narrow escape from being torn in pieces by the saw.

"I continued at the mills and pursued my studies and labors until the month of June 1777, when I was in my Junior year, which completed the term of about four years and a half.

"As I have before observed, my attention to the things of religion became more rational and permanent, before I left home; — and my design when I set out to procure an education, was that I might be prepared for the work of the ministry. This object I kept continually in view, after I entered on the prosecution of my plan. My mind was habitually impressed with

the importance of living a religious life, I daily kept up secret prayer, and paid a greater attention to reading and hearing the word. I gained more clear and satisfactory views of the doctrines of the Gospel, and of the nature of regeneration, and Christian exercises from the discourses of our President, Dr. Eleazer Wheelock. About this time, I recollect that I had for a short time, some very comforting views of the glory of God's character, and divine things; and perceived a sensible alteration in my feelings. I found myself frequently in the exercise of ejaculatory prayer when studying my lessons. But these new views and feelings were followed by great spiritual darkness, and with such a deep sense of my sinfulness and great unworthiness that I dared not indulge so much as a faint hope that I was converted. Thus I remained for nearly two years in a very uncomfortable state, I still kept up, daily, my secret devotions, but had great conflicts from my inbred corruptions, and could take no comfort in things of this world, nor but little in the things of religion. I had many fears, at times, lest I had committed the unpardonable sin, from all of which my mind was at length freed. Thus, for a long season, while I resided at the mills, I was sifted and tried in every corner of my heart.

"In the winter after I entered College, there was a revival of religion among the students. The awakening was more general in the Freshman class, though there was a solemnity among nearly all the members of College. A number of my class-mates, and several others, were brought to indulge hope of their conversion. My exercises of mind at this time, were peculiar. Though I felt great anxiety for my spiritual state, I could not realize that I was in a state of condemnation, nor yet did I dare to hope that I was a Christian, though, at times, I thought I experienced real delight in religion, and from that time, my light and evidence that I was a friend of Christ gradually increased. Notwithstanding the little evidence I had gained of my conversion, I ventured to join the College Church sometime in 1775, while a Sophomore; and I hope, by the amazing grace of God, that notwithstanding my great remains of the body of sin and death, my criminal short-comings and abuse of distin guished privileges my experience has borne some faint resemblance to the light of the morning, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

CHAPTER III.

Goes to room in College. Instructs the Canadian boys. Experiences sickness. Leaves College for a time. College exercises interrupted. Returns to College. Has charge of Mores' School. Again leaves College. Returns. Finds embarrassments. Graduates with his class. Acknowledges the goodness of God in carrying him through. Studies Theology. Licensed to preach. Invited to Hadlyme. Receives ordination.

In June 1777, then in his junior year in College, Mr. Vaill, finding his health greatly impaired by his routine of labors and hardships at the mills, sought advice of the President of the College whether some other course might not be open to him by which he might defray his expenses and pursue his studies. The President proposed that he should remove into College, and take charge of certain Canadian boys, who had been sent there to receive an English education, and that he should have his board and tuition for instructing and taking the oversight of them. Accordingly he took a room in College; became the instructor of these boys, and in this manner defrayed his expenses and

continued with his class, pursuing his own studies, till his health failed under this change. He was attacked with the billious fever in the month of August, which continued for about three weeks, with unabated force. In this sickness, he was poorly provided for with suitable nursing, or with convenient lodging; being in College, without a constant attendant, most of the students gone, and having but few comforts. One of his class-mates went to his room several times in a day, and kindly administered to his wants; and the female who had the care of the Canadian boys sent him nourishing food, as he became able to receive it. A Physician attended him, and after his fever abated, he gradually convalesced; and as soon as he was able to ride on horseback, it was thought advisable that he should take a journey to Connecticut. He accordingly set out, and pursued his journey moderately, as he was able, and safely reached his father's house in Litchfield, where he remained till his health was fully restored.

On his return to College, he took charge of Mores' School, so called from a benefactor, of that name, to the College. This school was kept in a room in the College building, and by means of this service, Mr. Vaill continued to defray his expenses in part for one term, when in consequence of the scarcity of provisions, and

the deranged state of the College and of the Country, he returned again to Connecticut, and spent the winter of 1778, at his father's in Litchfield. The state of the College, at that period, is thus described by Mr. Vaill.

"The College was frequently in a state of alarm and especially so after Burgoyne, with the Northern army had taken the forts of Ticonderoga and Crown-point. Such was the confusion among the students, as well as apprehension on the part of the faculty, that College exercises were often interrupted, and in several instances, they were suspended, and the students permitted to return home; or they were sent for by their parents, or called for to join the militia, or to enlist in the army. For as many as two years before I graduated, frequent interruptions and embarrassments attended our College course.

"In the spring of 1778, I returned back to the College; but not finding provision made sufficient to board all the students in the commons, a number of us of different classes, agreed to purchase our own provisions, and to hire our board dressed at a private house not far from the College, and we continued thus to live until commencement, which was the fourth Wednesday in August. I then took my degree with my class; and to pay up my College bills

which remained unpaid, I was obliged to hire some money, which brought me in debt about twenty dollars, at the close of my College life."

"In carrying me through the trials and hardships of my Collegiate course, I find in the review, abundant occasion for gratitude to God for his care over me, and loving kindness towards me; and I would particularly notice the following things in which his goodness appears to have been very conspicuous.

"1. In upholding me and enabling me to maintain constantly, an unshaken resolution to persevere in my undertaking, amidst all my discouragments. Though my health was feeble, and I experienced distressing sickness, and great depression of spirits, and often felt that I could not long survive, yet I was not shaken in my purpose to go forward. Indeed, there was no time at which I indulged, for a moment, the thought of relinquishing the object I had in view.

"2. When I was brought into great straits through want of clothing or provisions, a way was soon opened in Providence for my relief. At one time I found myself in great straits for want of proper apparel; and for want of some articles, it seemed as if I must absent myself from the worship of God, on the Sabbath, and, on one Saturday, I concluded I should have to tarry at home the next day for want of some

articles of clothing; but Providentially, before night, my father arrived from Connecticut, and brought me the articles I wanted, very unexpectedly to me.

"I would mention another instance still more deserving of notice. In my Senior year, having returned to College after spending the winter at my father's in Litchfield, I was for a short time much embarrassed, having no bed, and finding no provision made in the hall for the board of the students. Being short of money, I knew not, at first, what course to pursue. But, through a kind Providence, in the course of one or two days, I was provided with a room and comfortable lodging, and provisions for board. Thus was I provided for, from time to time, when I knew not from what quarter to look for relief from man."

Having honorably finished his College education, Mr. Vaill turned his attention directly to the study of Theology; and, for this end, he went to reside with the Rev. Mr. Storrs, of Northbury, now Plymouth, Oct. 14th, 1778. Here, again he was favored with the privilege of teaching a public school in the winter, which enabled him to meet his pecuniary engagements. Mr. Storrs also gave him privileges, received him into his family, furnished him with firewood, gave him the use of his library and in-

structed him gratuitously. He remained with Mr. Storrs till May, 1779, when the Association, to which Mr. Storrs belonged, met at his house, and on his recommendation, Mr. Vaill offered himself for examination, and, having sustained himself in its several parts, he was licensed as a candidate for the Gospel Ministry.

Extracts from his journal, written while residing with Mr. Storrs.

"Nov. 8th, 1778. — Whereas I am cold and barren, and unfruitful in religion, under precious privileges and clear light, and fearing that I spend too much of my time in sleep, and through negligence, become unfit for spiritual duties; and whereas I am too apt to spend my time in conversation that profits not; I do now, in the presence of God, resolve,

"1. That I will rise early in the morning, if well, and offer up my supplications to the God of all grace for divine life and quickening.

"2. That I will guard against excess in eating, and will take bodily exercise suitable to my employment.

"3. That I will endeavour to turn all my conversation upon profitable subjects. These resolutions will I keep, God's grace assisting me.

"Dec. 8th. — I feel some sense of the importance of being altogether a Christian, and of

devoting myself wholly to God. I made some resolutions, but find that I easily break them; I am convinced there is such a thing as being near to God, and enjoying his special presence and communion with him daily. I therefore now resolve to deny myself of those things which I think stand in the way of such a nearness to God, and humbly implore Divine grace to assist me to walk with God every day.

"At times I find so much coldness in religion, and my heart so easily drawn away from God, that I fear I never was truly reconciled to him through Christ; I fear I never was divorced from the law and married to Christ; my heart is so hard, my affections so dull, my duties dead works. I am now resolved by Divine grace assisting, to rise from my sloth and live like a Christian. I expect soon to enter on the great work of the ministry: but, alas! how unfit I am therefor! I must take up the cross, and get above the world before I can overcome it. I must have Christ for the Captain of my salvation, or I shall never gain the conquest. Help me to live to thee, O my God and Redeemer from this date, April 18th, 1779.

"May 6th. — Day of public fast. This day I desire sincerely to confess my sins, and to put away every abomination, and penitently to supplicate the throne of grace for mercy, for re-

newing grace, and for Divine life and love ; that God would effectually humble me, and bring me off from every legal dependence, and build me up in Christ; that he would be with me and prepare me to preach the Gospel, and to go forth into his vineyard in the name of Christ; and that he would be entreated for our land and save us from ruin, and revive and build up the cause of the Redeemer. And O Lord, assist me, a poor worm, in all the duties of the day."

In view of being licensed to preach, 23d May, 1779. "If licensed, as I expect to be on Tuesday next, I propose to enter upon the work of the ministry, on the following Sabbath. O that God would prepare me for that great and solemn work, and for that end, give me a double portion of his Holy Spirit. I pray I may not be left to go in my own name ; but, if I am not called of God to go forth into his vineyard, that he would prevent my going."

Referring to this period, in a brief review of his life, at a subsequent date, he says, "I preached the first Sabbath after I was licensed, for Mr. Storrs ; and having preached in different places four sabbaths in all, I was sent for to preach in Hadlyme, where, after I had preached for them twenty Sabbaths, the Church and Society gave me a call to settle with them in the Gospel ministry.

"Though the society was small and unable to give a minister a large salary, and it was then going on the sixth year of the revolutionary war, and the rapid depreciation of the paper currency rendered the situation of ministers truly embarrassing, in being confined to small salaries, still I adhered to the maxim, which I had adopted before, that where a people gave a candidate an harmonious invitation to settle with them and manifested a willingness to support him according to their ability, he ought to view it a call of Providence. I therefore, after taking the subject into solemn consideration, and seeking light from above, gave them an affirmative answer on the 1st of January, 1780. They proceeded to select an Ecclesiastical council, and appointed the 9th day of February following, for my ordination. I was accordingly ordained over the Church of Hadlyme, on the 9th of February, 1780."

Thus was he enabled to accomplish his plan for obtaining an education, and permitted to receive a pastoral charge. What pious youth that seeks to be qualified for the Gospel Ministry will not take encouragement from this example? It is not surprising that, to friends and acquaintance, Mr. Vaill's course should, at first, have appeared visionary and impracticable. It involved hardships and privations; and it re-

quired much self-denying effort; yet he maintained it undiscouraged, and was carried through successfully, at a period when there were no public charities provided for indigent pious youth, and when the facilities for young men to help themselves were far less than at the present time.

The hardships through which Mr. Vaill passed in acquiring his education, had formed his habits of self-discipline. He had learned to submit to privation, and to endure toil, and patiently to bear trials. It is evident that he was not seeking great things for himself; nor was he aspiring after a great place; but he was ready to labor in his Master's cause in a humble station, and with limited means, if he could only be useful to the cause of Christ, and be found faithful in the part of the vineyard entrusted to him.

CHAPTER IV

Enters on the Pastoral office. Time of declension. Half-way covenant. Pastoral labors. Interest in children. His oversight of his people. Attention to the afflicted. Doctrinal views. Importance of sound doctrine. Punctuality. Character of his preaching. Its influence. His fidelity acknowledged.

The period at which Mr. Vaill commenced his Pastoral labors was one of trial to faithful ministers. The revolutionary war was in progress; the minds of people were absorbed with interest in the events of this protracted, and then doubtful struggle. Alarms were frequent; and the attention of the people on the Sabbath, as well as on other days, was diverted from the subject of religion to the passing events, and was occupied with good or bad news from the army. In this state of public feeling, the regular worship of God failed of securing that holy influence on churches and congregations, which is ordinarily witnessed under the preaching of the Gospel in time of peace and tranquility. It was a time of declension in the churches. The church in Hadlyme was in a low state, consist-

ing of less than forty members, and of these, only twelve were males. The half-way covenant, as it has been termed, had been introduced, to some extent in the Congregational churches of Connecticut. By this, heads of families were permitted to give their assent to the articles of faith in a church, for the sake of having their children baptized, when they, as parents, gave no evidence of a change of heart, and did not view themselves as qualified to go to the ordinance of the Lord's supper. Some of the Pastors were Arminians in their Theological views; and, in general, Pastors were satisfied with the maintenance of the regular worship of God on the Sabbath, as constituting the required amount of their labors.

In entering on the Pastoral office, Mr. Vaill set himself at once against the half-way covenant practice. As some diversity of opinion prevailed in his church in regard to this, it occasioned him some trials for a time; but, at length, he had the happiness to see his church united in abandoning it.

In addition to the regular worship of God on the Sabbath, he early commenced a series of labors which with occasional suspensions and alterations in conformity to circumstances, he maintained through a period of more than fifty years. Religious conferences and prayer meet-

ings, and church prayer meetings were included in this series of labors. At first, great prejudices existed against religious meetings in the evening, and occasional religious meetings on week days; and in reference to his maintaining these in the early part of his ministry, Mr. Vaill was called by some, a New Light, (which was a term applied to certain separatical preachers, on account of their innovations and irregularities.) Experience of the utility of such meetings gradually diminished the prejudices against them, and instead of being regarded as irregularities, tending to dangerous results, they were found conducive to piety, and have become common in all Evangelical churches.

The religious instruction of children was early an object of attention in the ministry of Mr. Vaill. He not only inculcated and urged on parents and heads of families, their duty to train up those committed to them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; he also publicly catechised the children in the house of God, at appointed seasons, and held occasional religious meetings for the improvement of the young people, which he conducted differently at different times, with a view to keep alive and increase the interest in them. As inspector and visitor of the Common Schools, he also exerted a salutary moral and religious influence over

the minds of the young. His attention to the religious welfare of the children and youth of his congregation was not for a period, and then given up; but it was continued with undiminished interest through his whole ministry. In the religious education of the children, he was laboring in the nursery of the church, and this too, with encouraging prospect of the church's increase and prosperity. After Sabbath Schools were instituted, the religious instruction of children was more extended, and not so immediately dependent on the Pastor; yet the Pastor's influence was still concerned in the operation of the Sabbath School, and in the adaptation of the course of instruction to the improvement of the pupils.

As a Pastor, Mr. Vaill watched over his flock as one deeply feeling the weight of his charge; and he diligently ministered to them, not only in public on the Sabbath, but also from house to house. As his Church was small, and his parish not large, he was enabled to know the state of families and of individuals more fully than most Pastors. In his intercourse with his people, he was open, kind, frank and honest in efforts for their spiritual good, so that however, at times, individuals felt reproved in their conduct by his fidelity, or might be ready to be offended at his plainness, they were constrained

to feel that his motives were good. The conviction was deep and general, that he was an honest man, honestly laboring in the cause of his Master.

He acquired the confidence of his people, and retained it, not by some periodical and extraordinary efforts, not by a few brilliant achievments, nor by attempting great things in the sight of men, but by the patient and persevering discharge of his ministerial duties, in a plain and unostentatious manner, under many discouragements, through a long ministry.

In seasons of affliction, he was careful to remember his people in his prayers, and to visit them, to sympathize with them, and to give them instruction suited to their circumstances. He viewed such seasons as favorable for inducing them to attend to their spiritual interests; and at such seasons the most careless are often willing to see a minister, and are in a tender state of feeling, so that Pastoral visits can be made in prospect of good. The devoted Pastor experiences, in his visits to the sick and dying, and in families in which death has been commissioned to enter the most affecting and thrilling scenes of interest in his ministry; and it is in this portion of his labors, that he may avail himself of the natural sympathies and sensibilities of our nature in carrying instruction to the

heart. In no connection is the presence of the Godly Minister more valued than by the bedside of the sick and dying, on funeral occasions, and in the house of mourning.

In his doctrinal sentiments Mr. Vaill was strictly Calvinistic. He adhered to the formula of doctrine in the Saybrook Platform and in the Catechism of the Assembly of Divines. He laid much stress on doctrinal preaching. The totally depraved state of man; the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; the Divinity and atonement of Christ, the fulness and freeness of salvation through the atonement to them who believe, the sovereignty of God in the election of grace, the perseverance of saints in holiness unto eternal life, and the duty of sinners to comply immediately with the terms of the gospel, are subjects on which he dwelt much in his preaching. Indeed, the doctrines of grace, as maintained by New England Calvinists, were inculcated in his public preaching and Pastoral visits, in contradistinction to the Arminian views which prevailed, more or less, in the former part of his ministry, and in opposition to the Arminian and Pelagian philosophy which made its appearance in the latter part of his ministry. The following extract from his journal shows his adherence to the great doctrines, and how cautious he would be against introducing into

his pulpit a preacher, who should not hold to them.

"While absent from my people, something very singular occurred. I left them without encouragement that the pulpit would be supplied on the following sabbath; and on my return I found they had been supplied by a minister of another denomination, who is unsound in the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. I conclude the plan was set on foot by some person or persons inimical to me, or rather to the doctrines which I preach, and who are wishing to break up the order of the society, or, at least to introduce an Arminian preacher. That any members of the Church should encourage or connive at such a move is the most wonderful. It is extremely singular for a people, in the absence of their Pastor to call in a preacher of another denomination, who is known to be of opposite sentiments in doctrine to their own minister; and as singular for a preacher to come in under such circumstances. But I leave the event with the Divine Disposer of all events.

"I consider it a great judgment for any people to have a minister settled among them who prophecies smooth things, who denies the totally depraved state of man by nature, the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit of God, the doctrine of Divine sovereignty in the salvation

of sinners, and the perseverance of saints, as with the denial of these, are connected sentiments which are entirely subversive of the whole scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ." (1804.)

Thus regarding the doctrines of grace, he could not give his countenance to preachers whom he deemed unsound in the faith, nor could he hear them preach, without faithfully remonstrating against their unsoundness. He did not view erroneous doctrine as harmless, nor as safe for any people. Hence he was not only cautious not to admit such preachers into his own pulpit, but was faithful, when called to take a part in the examination of candidates for the gospel ministry, to bring out their views of the great doctrines of the Bible; and he acted the same faithful part, also, when called to sit as a member of Ecclesiastical councils for the examination of candidates for ordination. He would conform to the Apostolic directions, in requiring those invested with the sacred office, "*to hold fast the form of sound words, to speak the things which become sound doctrine, holding fast the faithful word, that they may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince gainsayers.*" Modern speculations in regard to moral agency and native depravity, he regarded as innovations upon the faith. He

often mourned in view of the tendency of these speculations to unsettle the church in their former doctrinal views, and to encourage and countenance a lax theology.

Punctuality is a seemingly small virtue, yet, in a minister of the gospel, it is of cardinal importance. Mr. Vaill was distinguished for his punctuality in all the relations of life. This trait in his character had no small influence in securing good results in his ministry. When he made an appointment he did not forget it. At the hour of public worship on the Sabbath, he was present; at the appointed hour for the prayer meeting or religious conference, or public lecture, or funeral, he was present. His punctuality extended to all his engagements, at home and abroad, among his people and on Ecclesiastical councils. This punctuality in their Pastor had its influence on the people. It tended to make them punctual in their attendance on his appointments for religious worship; they knew he would be present at the time appointed, and of course, they made their arrangements to be present also. Though he lived at the distance of nearly a mile from the house of public worship, he rarely if ever failed of being present punctually at the appointed hour on the Sabbath, at all seasons of the year, and under all the variations in the weather. So uniform

was he in respect to attendance and to time, that his approach to the house of the Lord on the morning of the Sabbath became a kind of regulator for the time-pieces in the neighborhood.

As a preacher, he was plain and simple in in his style, and in his manner, solemn and ardent. His countenance was grave and sober, indicative of sincerity and seriousness of purpose. His voice was full and distinct, so that he could be easily heard by all in the assembly; and his public preaching, as to manner and matter, was adapted to edify the people of God. Though he could not be ranked among the most talented, or the most logical, or the most eloquent preachers; still he always preached important truth in a manner to instruct and edify the people of God; and he was often very solemn and impressive in the application of truth to sinners, and in his addresses to them; and in general he had the attention of his audience. Under such a preacher, a people would be very criminal not to become well indoctrinated and well instructed in the duties of piety and morality, and the people of God might be expected to be spiritually edified, and to be built up in the faith and hope of the Gospel.

The long period of his ministry afforded him an opportunity to be well known as a preacher

in neighboring congregations; and in the latter part of his ministry, when he stood almost alone, as one of the fathers, laden with experience, and viewing his course as nearly finished, he was received and listened to with delight by the good people in all those congregations, and was looked upon as a venerable and faithful minister of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

His marriage. A happy connection. Fidelity of his companion. Success in the government and education of their children. Industry and economy. Devoted to the instruction of youth. Extracts from his journal. Death of his companion. Extracts from his letters. Affectionate respect shown him by his children.

It is sometimes the case that men appear to greater advantage in public than in domestic and private life. In a memoir that is designed to be a faithful representation of the character of an individual, it is necessary to view him in the every day walks of life, and especially in his own family, where he is called to act as the head and guardian of his little community. The domestic relations of a minister of the gospel, ought ever to be subservient to his usefulness in the higher stations which he sustains to the church of God. The subject of this memoir appears to have entertained this view. Hence in the choice of a companion for life, he selected one that was qualified not only to be an help meet for him in domestic life, but also

in promoting his usefulnes to the Church of God, in his sacred calling.

October 12th, 1780, Rev. Joseph Vaill, of Hadlyme, was married to Miss Sarah Fowler, eldest daughter of the late Rev. Joseph Fowler, of East Haddam. The connection was an eminently happy one. Mrs. Vaill having been educated in a minister's family, knew how to accommodate herself to the situation she was to fill, and her good sense and exemplary piety procured for her the respect and confidence of the people to whom her husband ministered. In the management of her domestic concerns, she sought to please her husband, and was uniformly faithful and consistent in sharing with him in the cares and responsibilities of their household. Discretion is a crowning excellence in female character; and this, in Mrs. Vaill, was strikingly manifest. She proved an help meet to her husband through a long life, and contributed her share of influence in aiding him in the government of their household, in the education of their children, and in promoting the cause of religion among the people.

As the fruit of this marriage, they were blessed with eight children four of whom died in their infancy and childhood, and four of whom are still living — two sons and two daughters. The pecuniary embarrassments

which attended Mr. Vaill in the early part of his ministry, in procuring for his family a comfortable habitation, and in providing for their support, called for the united wisdom and economy of himself and wife; and through the blessing of God on their united exertions, and mutual counsels, they were extricated from debt, and found themselves with their young and rising family in the possession of a small *brown* house, and a few acres of land. There, they lived happy in each other; happy in their children; happy in the people among whom they dwelt, and contented with the allotments of Providence. That humble dwelling was the abode of domestic peace; of intelligence; of cheerfulness; of piety, and of hospitality. A stranger could not pass the night in that Christian family without feeling that religion casts a loveliness over the domestic circle, and that the sweetest joys of earthly friendship are shared in the family.

In all his domestic management, Mr. Vaill was an example of industry and economy. His industry was manifest in the constancy of his attention to the wants and welfare of his family; in his husbanding every thing, in his limited means, to the best advantage; and in suffering nothing to be wasted or lost through carelessness. His garden, his orchard, the little

land which he tilled ; his barn and out-houses ; and every thing pertaining to his fences ; his domestic animals and the general appearance of the whole, bore testimony to his industry. His economy was equally conspicuous with his industry. He understood and practiced the art of living well upon small means. The nominal salary which he received from his people was seventy pounds, in addition to which they made him some presents. In training up a family on his limited means, it was necessary to practice the strictest economy, and this he cheerfully performed as a Christian duty. He watched over his children and restrained them and instructed them with great fidelity. In discharging towards them his duty as a parent he was unwearied and unremitted in his efforts. He early attempted to form their habits in conformity to the requirements of Christ ; and he trained them to respect the institutions of religion and to be liberal in their feelings towards objects of benevolence. His devotedness to his family did not lead him to neglect his people. He was always in season in his weekly preparations for the pulpit, which were generally completed by Saturday noon. He wrôte much, and generally he commenced his preparation for the Sabbath early in the week, and had more or less time for visiting or for receiv-

ing company, without interfering with his preparation for the Sabbath. It was his practice, on Saturday evening, to read his sermons in his family, which he expected to preach on the Sabbath, giving his wife an opportunity to express her views in regard to them and the children an opportunity of hearing the truth contained in them, and this exercise was followed generally with some appropriate counsel to the children on the concerns of their salvation.

Mr. Vaill devoted some portion of his time to the instruction of youth. He opened a school in his own house, which he continued with occasional intermissions for several years, greatly for the improvement of the youth in his own, as well as neighboring parishes. Among those who were instructed by him in the preparatory stages of their education, were his two sons, the Rev. Wm. F. Vaill, late missionary to the Osage Indians, now missionary in the State of Illinois; and the Rev. Joseph Vaill, of Brimfield, Massachusetts. The late Rev. Dr. Griffin, the Rev. Dr. Harvey, and Wm. Hungerford, Esq. of the Hartford bar, may also be named as among his pupils in the preparatory stages of their education. By means of his school, he was enabled to assist his sons in obtaining their College education, and also, to give his daughters an education, qualifying them

for usefulness as teachers and as heads of families. Few parents have been more successful in the government and education of their children; and few parents have been more loved and respected by their children, up to the close of life. Mr. Vaill, after carrying each of his sons through their professional studies, had the satisfaction of seeing them licensed, and go forth acceptable preachers of the Gospel, and very soon invited to become pastors of Churches. Each son requested the father to preach at his ordination, and at each ordination the father had the satisfaction to perform this solemn service.

In the education of his children, Mr. Vaill uniformly had regard to their spiritual interests. The following extracts from his journal show the deep solicitude which he had for their salvation.

1785. "A tender concern for the salvation of my children, has greatly impressed my mind; and yet, after all, I am infinitely too cold and indifferent in my prayers and labors for their salvation."

1806. "I hope my eldest son is really acquainted with religion experimentally; and I labor and pray for the conversion of my other children; and I hope God will ere long bestow saving blessings upon their souls."

1814. "Though I have seemed to be but

poorly successful in the main, since I was settled in the ministry, yet I have this for my consolation, that I have two sons in the ministry, who, I hope, love religion and may make useful men. I also hope that each of my daughters is a friend of Christ. I can have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth. Though I passed through great hardships and many dangers in procuring my education, and have had a series of trials and difficulties to encounter since I entered the ministry, yet these are far more than compensated, if I may be instrumental in training up souls for heaven."

1819. "My wife and children lie much upon my mind; but I desire to leave them all with God. A God of the widow and the fatherless is he in his holy mountain. I have in my poor, imperfect way labored to train up my children for God from the early dawn of their reason. To him I dedicated them in their infancy, in baptism; and I followed them with instruction in the great truths of our holy religion as they were capable of receiving it. I restrained them from loose companions; from vicious practices, and from those ruinous and enchanting amusements by which many are ensnared and ruined; always attempting to remember them in my prayers, and looking to

God that he would bestow saving mercies upon their souls. And though I have poorly performed these duties to my children, I still hope the God of all grace has followed my efforts with a blessing. I must soon leave those of them who may survive me in an evil world; and to whom can I commit them, who can keep them in safety, but to thee, O thou Dear Saviour. With thee I leave my dear wife, should she survive me, and with thee I leave my fatherless children, and to thy merciful and faithful care I commit my flock. O, forsake them not; deny them not the sanctifying influences of thy Holy Spirit. I am rapidly advancing towards eternity! Solemn thought! How soon will it be said of me, 'he is dead.' People of my acquaintance who survive me, will point to my habitation as they pass by it and say, '*there lived their late minister.*'"

In July, 1832, Mr. Vaill was called to part with the wife of his youth, with whom he had lived almost fifty-two years. This bereaving providence he bore with calmness and pious resignation. The following entry was made in his private journal at the time. "Yesterday morning, I was called to part with the companion of my youth. She expired about six o'clock, after a distressing sickness of more than six weeks. While she had her reason,

she appeared to be much composed and resigned to the Divine will. She was scarcely heard to utter a complaint or groan through her long sickness. I hope she was a sincere friend of Christ, and that she has made a happy exchange of worlds. She had been a professor of religion nearly sixty years, and has lived a regular and exemplary life. She has truly been a faithful wife, and a kind and faithful mother to our children. Truly my loss is great. I am left in a lonely condition, but I have abundant cause for thankfulness that God has continued her to me so long."

"This day my beloved companion was committed to the grave. The funeral was appointed at two o'clock, P. M. The Rev. Isaac Parsons preached on the occasion from Psalm cxvi. 15. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' A large and solemn congregation were present. I must soon follow my departed companion. I hope I have now some comfort in God, and resignation to his holy will."

This affliction gave him an opportunity to exhibit the Christian graces of submission; of meekness; of trust in God; and of spiritual mindedness. Though he was eighty-one years of age, and encompassed with infirmities, yet he was not heard to murmur or complain; and

he felt that God had not forsaken him, though he had sorely bereaved him. His youngest daughter remained with him, and with affectionate assiduity ministered to his wants, and made his last years as comfortable as filial affection could make them under the decays of age. The following extract is from a letter written by this daughter.

"We shall all bear testimony to his parental fidelity. Never were children more faithfully instructed than his. He always took particular pains with us on the Sabbath. He required us to give a particular account of the sermons we heard; of the books we read; and frequently propounded questions upon the doctrines of Scripture. Father was a peculiar advocate for early rising. To that trait in his character, we can attribute much of what he was able to accomplish. Punctuality was likewise a prominent trait in his character. He formerly lived a very laborious life; when he preached, attended to the tuition of a number of youth fitting for College, labored upon his farm, and attended to visiting his people. He never was idle, until incapacitated for the active duties of life by old age. I send you a copy of what he wrote in my Album when he was eighty years of age, which is in letter form."

This copy is here inserted.

"My Dear Child: You will, I trust, listen to the counsel of a father, who now, by reason of the decrepitude of age, stands on the verge of eternity. I have ever exercised a tender solicitude for your temporal and spiritual welfare. It is my heart's desire and prayer to God, that you may possess *the one thing needful*, and that you may prove an eminent follower of the dear Redeemer, and be a great blessing in your day and generation, and, at last, receive the reward which he will bestow upon his servants who have been faithful unto death. Be not anxious to obtain the great things of this world, for yourself, or to make a conspicuous figure among the fashionable and brilliant circles of the age. But, let it be your first and chief concern to obtain "the hidden man of the heart," in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.

"Make diligent and faithful use of your precious time, which is rapidly gliding away. Spend no portion of it in foolish jesting and trifling amusements. Be careful to rise early, when in health, and retire into your closet and pray to your heavenly Father, who "seeth in secret," and let every day be closed with the like devotion.

"Never let a day pass without reading some

portion of the sacred Scriptures, unless Providentially prevented. As the mariner keeps his eye on his compass, when sailing on the dangerous ocean, so all who desire a safe passage through this tempestuous world to the haven of eternal rest, should make the Word of God their constant guide.

"Always bear in mind that a life of faith on the Son of God, and holy obedience to all his commands, is the only safe course for frail, sinful creatures to pursue, while they are passing through this evil, distracted, dying world to a boundless eternity. To maintain a life of ardent piety, and a humble, prayerful walk with God, will alone prepare people for a faithful discharge of the duties which belong to their respective stations, and to share the consolations and supports of the gospel under the trials and sufferings which they may be called to experience in their journey through this world, and to enjoy comfort under the dark and painful scenes which are common to decrepit old age; or at whatever stage of their existence, they may be called out of time, their end will be peace and their eternity blessed.

From your affectionate parent,

JOSEPH VAILL."

Hadlyme, Dec. 25th, 1830.

Extracts from letters to his eldest daughter.

"My Dear Child: You are now as you have been for several summers past, in a place of great responsibility. The care of the education of children, is a solemn charge. The person who officiates as an instructor of schools, has something more to do than to teach them the common rules of reading and writing. There should be strict attention paid to their manners; their morals and religion. I know there are many obstacles in the way of the success of school teachers, in promoting the ends above mentioned, where they have not the co-operation of parents; but this will not excuse them from a faithful discharge of their duty. The good government of a school, is also attended with many difficulties, and especially where parents are deficient essentially, in the subjection of their children to parental authority. Hence much wisdom, prudence, and discretion are requisite. Too much severity is detrimental; though good discipline is necessary."

To the same daughter at another date.

"As I draw near to my great and last change, I think I have an increasing sense of the weight and importance of eternal things, and, of course, the world with all its riches, honors and refinements, appears to be more and more an empty

place, and wholly unworthy of the eager pursuit of a rational and immortal creature. I am also more deeply convinced of the infinite importance of Christians living near to God, and of maintaining a course of self-denial, and of spiritual mindedness, and that they daily improve their time and talents for Christ. This, my daughter, is the only course which will lead to a peaceful and blessed immortality."

To the same, while on a tour to the South.

"*My earthly tabernacle must soon be dissolved; but I hope I have a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* At turns I have distressing doubts, and great anxieties about my spiritual state. We all rejoice to hear that you have had a prosperous journey thus far. I hope the Lord will carry you all to the place of destination, and that you may be returned again in health and peace; and that you may do good and get much spiritual good, on your tour. You will continue to share a remembrance in my prayers: and may the God of all grace be with you."

The following extract is from a letter, dated Feb., 1831, soon after the marriage of this daughter with Joel Norcross, Esq., of Monson, Massachusetts, addressed to them jointly.

"It is natural for parents to be pleased with the promising prospects under which their

children are settled in the world, and especially, for aged parents to have the prospect of leaving them in a prosperous and eligible condition, when they expect soon to quit the stage, and can see their children no more. But still all pious parents have doubtless a stronger desire that the respective branches of their family should be left in the possession of an infinitely more important heritage than earth can possibly afford. My wish above all things, is that your souls may be in health and prosper."

"July, 1834. Should I live until next Monday, I shall be eighty-three years old, but I know my time of life is fast drawing to a close. My great anxiety is to be found in readiness for my Lord's coming. This, my daughter, is an object of sufficient importance to engross our chief attention through life."

"Jan., 1836. I generally rest tolerably well at night, though my mind is so constantly employed in dreams that the nights seem very long. I am generally much in company with ministers, and oftentimes am attending on religious exercises in my slumbering moments. But, still, I have my depressed and gloomy turns when awake, though I have intervals, I hope, in which I enjoy some spiritual consolations; but the thought of the last conflict with death lies much upon my mind. I view it a

great thing to be a sincere Christian. Eternity, and a due preparation for heaven, should daily be uppermost, amid all the labors and employments of life. O, my dear children, you will, I hope, daily keep your end in sight, and labor, and pray fervently for the full assurance of hope. That you and all your family connections may be prepared to meet your God, and give up your account with joy, is the sincere prayer of your aged father. J. VAILL."

It must be a satisfaction to children, to review the life, and recall to mind, the example and the counsels of such a father. That his fidelity to them as a Christian father, was in a measure recompensed in their dutiful conduct and affectionate regard to his welfare even to the close of life, there is abundant evidence to believe. The younger son, the Rev. Joseph Vaill, of Brimfield, Mass., expressed himself thus in a letter to the ministerial brother who preached at the funeral of his father.

"Brimfield, Dec. 12th, 1838. Rev. and Dear Brother — Mrs. Norcross has favored me with the perusal of a letter received from you, giving particulars of the death and burial of our honored father. I take this opportunity to tender to you my sincere thanks for the interest you took in him, and for the part you bore in giving him a Christian burial. May God reward you

my brother, an hundred fold. I always felt that, should I survive my father, I should not fail, if possible to be present, if not to close his eyes in death, at least, to attend him to his grave. But it was so ordered in Providence, that I must be denied the mournful privilege. He was committed to the dust the very day we received the first intelligence of his illness. But every thing was done, I doubt not, that was proper to be done, to testify respect to this good man, as it regards his funeral obsequies."

CHAPTER VI.

His natural shrewdness. His feelings in regard to this trait in his character. Powers of conversation. Poetical talent. Extracts from his poetry. Notice of his publications. Sermon at the ordination of his younger son — extracts. Sermon at the ordination of his elder son — extracts.

The natural qualities of men are not changed under the transforming power of Divine grace, in the renewal of their moral natures and transformation into the moral likeness of Christ. There was in Mr. Vaill a natural shrewdness, and quickness of discernment in regard to men and things, which gave to his conversation, at times, a facetiousness which was highly enlivening and interesting. Many anecdotes are still in the remembrance of his acquaintance, illustrative of this trait in his character. It was by means of this trait, that he was, at times, very severe in his retorts upon such as would accost him impertinently, or, for the sake of drawing forth some humerous reply. At times, also, his wit, in spite of all his efforts to restrain it, would spend itself pleasantly upon his friends.

It would flow out so unexpectedly and from under so ministerial a countenance, and with such pertinence of application, that every one in the company would be amused, and yet no one injured or offended by it. He was sensible of this foible, if it can be called a foible, and in his journal, he has recorded many resolutions at different times, in regard to restraining his speech and avoiding light and trifling conversation.

The following will exhibit his feelings in view of his indulgence in this trait of his character.

"What seems greatly to darken my evidences that I am a follower of Christ is my being often betrayed into light and unprofitable conversation, and especially when in company with ministers, who, of all others ought to be the most grave and circumspect in their life and conversation. I have reflected when alone, with much shame and sorrow upon my humorous observations in company, which have excited laughter. *Some* humor may not be inconsistent with the Christian character, but how exceedingly inclined are people to go to excess in lightness of speech which Paul tells us *is not convenient.*"

Mr. Vaill's powers of conversation were surpassed by few. He was accessible to all, ready to converse with any one he met; and, in gen-

eral his conversation was turned on something that was profitable. He would find something to say on the subject of religion in some form or other, in whatever company he might fall. It did not seem to fatigue him to talk. Good common sense characterized him in the use of his powers of conversation, and in general he interested and profited those with whom he conversed. He was particularly careful to speak with children, and young persons, and to say something that would lead their minds to the subject of religion. The children of his parish, and in families in which he was known out of his parish, uniformly looked up to him as the man of God whose counsels were good.

His studies, from the commencement of his education were maintained under many disadvantages. After he entered the ministry he had not leisure to indulge to any great extent in literary pursuits, or in labors foreign to his profession, for he was a laborious, working man in his calling. Still from early life, he discovered a poetical vein, which, under proper culture, and with leisure to indulge his fancy, might have acquired for him a considerable reputation as a poet. While in College, he indulged his fancy to some extent, in writing short pieces of poetry; and he did the same also, in the course of his ministry. Several of

his pieces have been published. His poem entitled "NOAH'S FLOOD," is most deserving of notice in this place. This was printed in pamphlet form in 1796. It consists of two parts.

Part I. "*Contains an historical account of the Deluge taken from the Bible; interspersed with conjectural observations.*"

Part II. "*Is designed as a Moral Improvement of the subject.*"

The whole poem consists of nearly five hundred and fifty lines. The following extracts will give the reader a specimen. The first is a few lines of the opening of the poem.

"In the beginning, from chaotic night,
God, by his powerful voice, called forth the light.
When he the corner stone of nature laid,
The morning stars their joyous homage paid,
And all the sons of God with sweet amaze,
In glorious concert joined to shout his praise;
They saw, with raptured minds this work divine,
And gazed to see the rays of Godhead shine;
Saw the thick darkness sever from the light,
And infant time commence her day and night."

After noticing the several steps in the progress of the creation, paradise, the apostacy and subsequent wickedness of the race, the piety of Enoch and Noah, the warning of the latter to prepare an ark for his safety, the build-

ing of the ark, its dimensions and appearance, he thus proceeds:

"Here stands this wonderous ship, no water near;
The people view the novel with a sneer,
And laugh to see the folly of the man,
To waste his substance and his life in vain.
Now the good patriarch with his chosen band,
Prepare to embark at God's supreme command,
When beasts and fowls and creeping things convene,
Moved by an impulse from a power unseen;
When some of every kind by pairs embark,
And find protection in the friendly Ark."

* * * * * *

"And now the ark bears up her ponderous load,
Slow and majestic towards the sable cloud;
Then drifts secure before the stormy gales,
Without the aid of pilot, helm or sails.
She's wafted safely o'er the watery main,
Upheld and guided by a hand unseen,
Each passenger in health, no life is lost,
Though with the stormy winds and billows tost.
And now on every side the waters rise,
Till they o'ertop the hills and meet the skies;
When every thing in which was vital breath,
Is swept away with universal death."

The following is from the second part of the poem, and will serve as a specimen of his "Moral improvement of the subject."

"As Noah's Ark sailed safe amidst the waves,
O'er rocks, o'er mountains, and ten thousand graves,

Upheld and managed by the Almighty's hand,
Until his household reached the wish'd for land:
Thus safely, on their passage, Christians move,
Borne by the arms of everlasting love,
Jesus will waft them o'er the troubled seas
To the fair haven of eternal peace.
Here saints of every tongue, at last shall meet,
And form one temple holy and complete;
Redeem'd from hell and washed from every stain,
They shall with God and Christ, in glory reign."

The following extract is from the conclusion of the poem.

"The world, once drowned, is now reserved in store,
To be destroyed by God's consuming power.
Redemption finish'd and his church complete,
The elements shall melt with fervent heat;
Dread lightning flash, and peals of thunder roll,
And rock the burning world from pole to pole;
Creation welter in a mass of fire,
When days, and time, and nature shall expire!
When God shall pour his vengeance from on high,
Where will poor infidels for covert fly?
No Ark to screen them from the fiery flood,
The powers of darkness, or the wrath of God;
No hiding-place for safety can be found,
In dark retreats or caverns of the ground;
No one to guard them from the burning flame,
Or fiercest wrath of the incensed Lamb."

In connection with the above poem, the author published three other short pieces. 1. "*Youth cautioned against vice*," consisting of 170

lines. 2. "*Happiness*," containing 40 lines. 3. "*Hymn for a New Year*," containing 32 lines. In addition to these, his poetical "*Address to a Deist*," may be named as an illustration of his shrewdness in exposing the folly and fallacy of the Deist's principles.

In the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, first series, there are several of his essays. His signature to some of them was Jethro, and to others, Senex. He also wrote a number of essays in the Pilgrim, which was published at New Haven, in 1822 -- 3. He was a contributor, from time to time, to the Religious periodicals of the day; and formerly, he addressed a series of letters to his female pupils upon various subjects relating to their best welfare, some of which have been published in public journals. His remarks upon temperance, in the latter part of his life, addressed to the aged, were extensively circulated in the newspapers, and were thought to do good.

The sermon which he preached at the ordination of his younger son, Mr. Joseph Vaill, to the pastoral charge of the Church of Christ in Brimfield, Massachusetts, in 1814, was published. This is the only sermon of which the compiler has knowledge, that he has left in print. The title of this sermon was "THE SON OF GOD MANIFESTED TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE

DEVIL." The text is I John III: 8. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." This sermon is a plain and faithful exhibition of important truths, containing, in the first place, a scriptural view of the works of the devil, and in the second place, an illustration of the way and means by which the Son of God will in redemption, destroy the works of the devil. This illustration is followed by appropriate inferences and addresses, from which the following are selected.

"1. That the wisdom, benevolence, grace, and justice of God are marvelously displayed in the great work of redemption.

"2. We learn the great impiety as well as presumption of such as teach the doctrine of universal salvation.

"3. All who enter the ministry should be men of skill in divinity, possessed of true zeal, holy fortitude, and eminent piety.

"4. We see the deplorable condition of all who are enemies to Christ."

Address to the pastor elect. "My son, as you are this day to be solemnly consecrated by the servants of Christ, to enter with them into his labors, you are to view yourself under the highest obligations to prove yourself his faithful ambassador. You are now about to enlist pub-

licly under the banner of the Redeemer, to aid in destroying the works of the devil. And are you deeply solicitous to know how one so imperfect and of but small experience in the Christian warfare, shall perform this weighty business? And especially, since it is a work infinitely too great for an arm of flesh to accomplish? While you are ready to sink under its pressure, from a consciousness of your utter insufficiency, call to mind how a youthful David effected the destruction of the mighty Goliah of Gath. Though but a stripling, David prevailed over this powerful champion, with only a sling and a stone. He encountered him not in his own name, but in the name of the God of the armies of Israel. Go, therefore, in the strength of the Lord of Hosts, and he will make your way prosperous. You may with safety adopt the words of Paul, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

"Would you prove an able and successful minister of Jesus Christ, you must take heed to your doctrine as well as to your practice. Preach the doctrines of the cross, clearly and faithfully. Seek not to please men, but your Divine Master. Let not a vain desire for popular applause induce you to suppress the soul-humbling truths of the Gospel which are so disgustful to the corrupt heart. Let it be your constant labor

and concern, to save your own soul, and them that hear you. Maintain a humble and circumspect and holy walk with God. Keep near the throne of Grace, pray fervently and importunately to God, for yourself and your flock. Watch over them with tenderness and fidelity. 'Feed Christ's sheep, and feed his lambs with the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.'

"The work in which you are about to engage is a glorious work, though attended with great and numerous trials. It is a work in which the Sacred Three, and the myriads of holy angels which surround the throne of God, are continually employed; a work which all the redeemed of Christ have been laboring to promote from the beginning. Be willing to spend and be spent in this blessed service. And freely sacrifice your ease, your reputation, your worldly possessions, and even life itself, if necessary, in the promotion of so glorious a cause.

"My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The vows of God are doubly upon you. You was dedicated in the early dawn of life. You have also given up yourself to him, by a voluntary profession of Christ. And you are now to be publicly consecrated to him by his ministers, to be employed as a laborer

in his harvest. And your father, who, by reason of age, stands on the verge of eternity, does now cordially give you up afresh to the Son of God; hoping and praying that you may shine as a light in the world, when he shall sleep in the dust. 'May your bow abide in strength by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob.' And, as he that was separated from his brethren, was made instrumental of saving much people alive, so may you be the means of rescuing many souls from endless ruin. And God grant that a large number of your flock may be given you for 'the seal of your ministry, and the crown of your rejoicing in the day when he shall make up his jewels.' 'Be thou faithful unto death, and Christ will give thee a crown of life.'

"To the Church and Congregation in Brimfield. — Christian Brethren and friends: — As you have united in calling this youth to settle with you in the sacred ministry, it is the heart's desire and prayer of the speaker, that he may prove a rich and lasting blessing to you and your children. But, considering the deceitfulness of the human heart, and that many who have had a fair beginning, have concerning the faith made shipwreck, you cannot be assured that he will endure to the end. Yet, it is still earnestly hoped, that your expectations may

not be disappointed. But, after all, much depends upon your conduct towards him. It is highly important that you treat your young pastor with tenderness and candor, yet with faithfulness, and that you aid him by your friendly counsels, your example, and fervent prayers. And it is expected that you, in particular, who love Christ, and the souls of your fellow men, will prove an Aaron and a Hur, to aid in holding up his feeble hands, and that you will unite with him in attempting to destroy the works of the devil.

"Do not depress his spirit by causelessly neglecting to attend upon the worship and ordinances of God in his house; nor by restraining prayer in your families. And do you desire that your children and servants may be early taught of God, and trained up for heaven? Bring them with you from Sabbath to Sabbath, to the sanctuary. And press home upon their consciences, in private, those truths which they hear in public. Restrain them from evil company and vicious practices, and labor to train them up in the paths of true piety, that they may be useful and happy in this world, and everlastingly blessed in the world to come.

"And, my brethren, let me exhort you to take heed, lest you receive the grace of God in

vain. Take heed how you hear, and how you improve your spiritual privileges, looking diligently lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Keep constantly in mind your accountability to God. The time is short. You must soon meet your minister at the tribunal of Christ. And may he so preach, and you so hear, that each of you may give up your account with joy and not with grief. And may you mutually prove each other's 'crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.'"

"*The Discriminating Teacher.*"— This is the title of a manuscript sermon, preached by the Rev. Joseph Vaill, at North Guilford, in 1808, at the ordination of his eldest son, the Rev. Wm. F. Vaill. The text is selected from Jeremiah xv. 19: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, if thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me, and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, then shalt thou be as my mouth; let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them."

After some appropriate remarks upon the circumstances under which the text was spoken, and illustrative of its import, the following doctrinal sentiment is brought to view: "*It is infinitely important for ministers and teach-*

ers to take forth the precious from the vile, in all their administrations; or, in other words, to discriminate between truth and error; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

The sentiment is illustrated and enforced under two heads.

"I. How ministers of the gospel are to make this discrimination.

"II. Reasons why they should do this.

REFLECTIONS.

"1. Such as would be God's mouth to mankind, should be men of eminent piety, and of eminent knowledge in the holy scriptures.

"2 They should be men of true Christian zeal and fortitude.

"3 They should be abundant in the duty of prayer.

"4. Learn the guilt of false teachers and unfaithful ministers."

Extracts from his address in this sermon, to his son.

"My son, as you are this day to be set apart to the work of the ministry, and to be as God's mouth to the people in this place, I trust you will listen to the counsel of a father who has had the experience of many years in this important work, and who has well nigh finished

his course, and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus. As you have desired the office of a bishop, you have desired a good work. Though attended with great trials, it is a blessed employment. How blessed to spend life, and employ every talent in building up the kingdom of the Redeemer! What calling can be more blessed than for imperfect men to be co-workers with God, and ambassadors for Christ! How consoling the thought of being used as instruments to enlighten, to quicken and sanctify Christians, and to train them up for the heavenly world!

"Look well, my son, to the motives by which you are actuated; see that you have an ultimate regard for the glory of God; see that you seek not your own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's; that you preach not yourself, but Christ and him crucified. Let the following considerations bear with weight upon your mind. You are utterly insufficient for the work to which you are called, of yourself; you will continually need communications of light, of quickening and of wisdom from above. You are responsible to the Lord Jesus Christ, how you fulfill your ministry. Keep in view the day of account, when you must meet the people of your charge before the tribunal of Christ.

Then you must render an account how you have preached, and they how they have heard the gospel."

Extract from his address to the Church and Congregation of North Guilford.

"Christian brethren and friends: — I trust you will receive your young pastor as an ascension gift of the Great Head of the Church. And do you desire that his ministry may prove savingly beneficial to your souls? You must be reconciled to the truth, and must love and receive the genuine truths of the gospel into your hearts, and practice them in your lives; you must be firmly united with your minister in promoting the cause of Christ.

"My brethren, do you desire the flourishing of pure religion in this place? You must keep alive in the cause; you must also be a united and praying church. You can expect but small success from the ministry of your pastor, unless you pray fervently and importunately for him, that the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in his hands."

CHAPTER VII.

Extracts from his Journal, illustrating his personal piety.

In his personal piety, Mr. Vaill was governed by deep and abiding convictions of duty. He regarded religion as the great concern of life, and he felt that it required daily attention to lead a religious life, and more or less self-denial. He was regular and uniform in his observance of secret prayer; and was to some extent, in the habit of setting apart days for private fasting and prayer, with a view to increase his own spirituality. The following extract is from his journal, entered in 1780, in view of a day of private fasting.

"Considering my barrenness, coldness, stupidity, formality, and the absolute need in which I stand of the divine presence, and of feeling my dependence upon Christ, and how I have dishonored God by my coldness and worldly-mindedness, and considering the awful stupidity prevailing in the Parish, I have concluded to set apart this day, Sept. 5th, for secret fasting

and prayer, to confess my sins, and to bewail my barrenness, and hypocrisy, and to plead with God to cleanse me from my sins, and to visit my soul with the quickening influences of his blessed Spirit, that he would give me the life and power of godliness, make me a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, keep me from being ensnared by the world in trying seasons that God would lead and guide me in the path of duty, and save me from dishonoring his great name and wronging precious souls, and that he would pour out his Spirit upon the church and Society, and greatly revive his work. O, that God would grant me his Spirit, to enable me to fast and pray aright, for Christ's sake."

There is no doubt of the utility of private fasting and special prayer in promoting the holiness of God's people, and this means has been resorted to by eminently holy ministers, and private Christians in every age.

The following resolutions are entered in his journal, Feb. 12th, 1781.

"Considering the importance of living to the glory of God, that not only my own peace and welfare much depend upon it, but the spiritual welfare of my family, and in a great measure, the spiritual welfare of my people also, I do now, as in the immediate presence of my Lord

and Judge, resolve, by his grace assisting me,

"1. That I will be more sober, watchful, prayerful and temperate.

"2. That I will rise early in the morning, and my first business shall be, as soon as I can attend, to call upon God for assistance in the duties of the day.

"3. I will endeavor to converse upon religion or something profitable, whenever I have opportunity.

"4. I will now by divine grace put away every sinful lust.

"5. I will give myself wholly to God's service.

"6. I will use all proper endeavors to revive religion in my family and in the society. And wilt thou, most blessed Redeemer, help me to keep these and all my other resolutions. Amen.

The following entry was made in his journal April 13th, 1782.

"I find on looking back, that I have been remiss in duty, and have reason to chide myself in the following respects.

"1. My mind has been greatly perplexed about my worldly affairs, especially about purchasing a place.

"2. I have indulged many useless and unprofitable thoughts.

"3. I have spent too much time in unprofi-

table conversation, and have not sufficiently guarded my tongue in speaking of others, nor have I discountenanced the practice as I ought.

"4. I have spent too much of my time to little or no purpose, and have not been sufficiently engaged in promoting the great work to which I am called.

"5. I have too much gratified my carnal appetites, which tends to darkness of mind. I fear I have not been temperate in all things as it becomes a minister of the gospel to be.

"6. I fear I have been guilty of dishonoring God by my cold and hypocritical performance of duty.

"7. I have not been sufficiently watchful and prayerful, and have not taken good heed to practice as I have preached, nor cherished the good emotions of God's Spirit when I have felt them. I have been far too selfish in all my transactions, of a spiritual and temporal nature, and have not acted with an eye single to the glory of God, as I ought; for all of which I desire to be humble before God; and I resolve, by his grace assisting me, that I will now consecrate myself anew to him.

"And now, blessed God, by thy grace, I give myself wholly to thee, my heart, my best affections, my whole soul, my time, my talents, and all I enjoy, promising by thine assistance to live

and act, and speak, and think as one of thy children and one of thy ministers. Lord, accept of an unworthy worm, and make one wholly thine, and wash away all my sins in the blood of Christ, and help me to stand and fight a glorious warfare manfully to the end, with fortitude, courage, humility and meekness, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

RESOLUTIONS.

"1. To be temperate in all things.

"2. To spend my time wholly for God.

"3. Through Christ to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

"4. To read much, pray much, to meditate much, and to watch over my tongue."

"Sept. 6, 1782. When I look around upon the hardness, coldness, and stupidity of this people, it fills me with gloom, and seems to damp my spirits. I have thought best to set apart this day for private fasting and prayer, to confess my sins, and the sins of my people, to implore divine mercy for myself and people; and O, that God would assist me in these solemn exercises."

"March 14, 1795. O, how poorly do I spend my time, and how unbecoming a Christian and a minister do I live. Another week is gone, and what have I done for the cause of God?

I have lived too much like one, who has no religion. O Lord quicken my barren soul!"

"March 29th. I was filled with shame and many painful sensations last evening, in taking a view of my spiritual barrenness; and was led to many grievous reflections upon myself by reading Mr. David Brainerd's diary. I felt as though I was full of sin, and had greatly declined in religion. If I have any grace, O, how small must be the spark. I felt it a difficult thing to get near to God, but this must be the effect of unbelief. It seemed as if there could be no great prospect of my being very useful or successful in the ministry, unless I am brought to live more spiritually and to be more alive in the things of religion. O, how great has been my pride and folly, and love of the world; how cold and formal my duties! Lord have mercy upon me and quicken my soul!"

"May 31st. I have lately had many striking views of death. It appears a most solemn and fearful change. I often tremble when I bring it near. Eternal misery appears inconceivably dreadful. I am filled with astonishment, when I think of any of my fellow creatures, being lost eternally, though I have not such fearful apprehensions of perishing as I once had. Whether I am deceived or not, God knows; yet, I think much upon the subject, with awful

wonder and amazement. O how slack, after all, am I in my duty towards my fellow sinners, in attempting to save their souls from death! When I consider my deficiencies in duty, my follies, my blindness, my too great worldliness, my spiritual barrenness, I blush and am ashamed before God."

"March 1st, 1800. I have many thoughts on religion, and on future things, but am not suitably affected by these great subjects. My stupidity and want of life in prayer, and of being more spiritual in my daily conversation often lead me to scruple my sincerity. This morning had some serious exercises on the subject of ministers' enjoying the presence of Christ. I feared I had but small tokens, if any true ones, of having the gracious presence of Christ. This he hath promised to his faithful ministers, — "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world." Though I have thought that I have experienced supports and consolations in some degree, in the course of my ministry, under trials, yet why am I so barren; why no more useful and successful among my people, if Christ is with me? I know I am unworthy that he should come under my roof, much more that he should dwell in my heart; but he has condescended, and does still condescend to dwell with the meanest of his followers. O, Divine

Saviour, purify my heart from the idols which hinder thee from taking up thine abode with me."

"Dec. 11th, 1802. With what astonishment do I often view the thoughtless world, who have no apparent concern to escape the wrath to come, and to enjoy God's favor in heaven. I feel these things with pressing weight in my lonely and retired moments; but when I am among people, whom I have reason to fear have no religion and are in constant danger of perishing forever, there is, at times, a sort of backwardness in my mind to introducing these solemn subjects. The occasion, or the time, or place, or company, or previous conversation, seem to forbid it! Forbid!! Oh, how do I blush with shame, when alone, to think any thing should hinder me from attempting to rescue immortal souls from the pit of everlasting destruction!"

"July 15th, 1806. My mind is not alive in religion as it ought to be. I have a hope that I love Christ, and the ways of piety, but how many things against me! The evidences in my favor appear to be the following;

"1. I have, as I think, a fixed and realizing sense of the truths contained in the word of God.

"2 Habitual love and relish for the spiritual truths of the Gospel.

"3 Some real delight in the duties of religion, and in Christian conversation.

"4. Love for those who bear the image of Christ. I think I view them as the only excellent of the earth. Their society, conversation and practice afford me much satisfaction. Indeed I can take no real satisfaction in the company of the worldly and irreligious.

"5. I think I have an ardent desire for the revival of pure and undefiled religion, not only among my own people, but that Christ's kingdom may be built up and prevail universally.

"6. I put my trust and hope in God, prevailingly, as the righteous Governor of the world, and as the great Disposer of all events, and though I am not reconciled, as I ought to be, to his adverse Providences, yet I feel a degree of resignation prevailing in times of calamity.

"7. I trust I am in some measure weaned from the world. Though I am sensible I have too much of a carnal disposition, yet for many years, the world has appeared to me such an empty place, and so devoid of all solid comfort that I have not been seeking "great things for myself." I am far from envying the rich, the great and honorable of the earth, and I desire

no more of this world than will subserve the spiritual good of myself and family.

"8. I have some affecting sense, habitually, of the shortness and great uncertainty of life, and of the solemn scenes of judgment and eternity, and of the inconceivable misery of such as die in their sins.

"But after all these things, which seem to be evidences in favor of my piety, there are still other things against me. Such are the following;

"1. My having no clearer views of the glory of the character of God, and of the excellency and preciousness of Jesus Christ.

"2. Though I have a great sense of my extreme vileness, and of the depths of wickedness within my heart, yet I am often stumbled that I pray and labor no more earnestly to be delivered from my inbred corruptions, and to keep my body under.

"3. My hope is frequently staggered by reason of that pride which seems to run through all my public performances.

"4. The coldness and wandering thoughts, which often attend the performance of duty, damp my hope.

"5. My disposition too often to indulge in light and humorous observations, when in company, has been very trying to my mind, and

frequently has staggered my charity for myself.

"6. I find my mind often agitated and ruffled by disappointments or occurrences, which have come on me unexpectedly, when not the most weighty things were at stake.

"7. My want of life, of love, of zeal and fervency in attempting to promote vital religion among the people of my charge, when, at the same time, I have a rational conviction of the worth of their souls, and of the danger they are in of perishing forever. This has been very stumbling to me, and often has led me to call in question my own sincerity.

"8. But one of the greatest evidences against me, is the small proof I can find of that holy and growing conformity to God, that meekness, humility, deep contrition for sin, and spiritual-mindedness, which every Christian, and especially every minister of Jesus Christ, ought daily to exercise. 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'"

In a feeble state of health; "Feb. 24th, 1813. I can expect but little more than infirmities the rest of my days. I desire to pray for patience and resignation to the Divine will. My time must be very short for this world. Death is a solemn scene. I often shudder at the thought

of dying, and yet I feel no desire to live barely for enjoying the things of this world. Unless I can enjoy the presence and blessing of God, and be employed in doing good, I conceive that I can answer no important end by living. I need more lively faith in order to meet death with Christian fortitude. I hope in the infinite mercy of God, to prepare me for my great change. I view my days as drawing to a close. My great concern is to be useful to my people and family, while I live, and to be prepared for a happy immortality."

"Oct. 25th. I have very different feelings and exercises from day to day, and my state of mind alters, and varies; — sometimes I feel calm, and take delight, as I think, in religion, and in the government of God; though sometimes I am gloomy and desponding. At times I feel much encouraged to hope that God is about to revive his work among my people, and that the good work is begun and progressing; at other times, I fear that religion is on the decline, and that all favorable indications are about to die away. But, I desire to leave the whole with God. My infirmities as well as age denote that my clayey tabernacle will soon be dissolved. I feel poorly prepared for the heavenly world, I am so much attached to this, and yet I hope through the amazing grace and

mercy of the Redeemer, to arrive, at last, at that holy and happy place.

"I think I have full evidence that I am a friend to religion, and to the cause of Christ, and that I long to see pure religion revive, but alas, how unfit do I view myself for the society of the redeemed, and of holy angels in heaven. But my only hope is in the free and sovereign mercy of God to prepare me for that blessed world.

"My only solid support and comfort are from the character, work, and promises of the Redeemer. I firmly believe he will fully accomplish all his vast designs, and will terminate them in the wisest and best manner."

"May, 1816. Every minister may expect more or less trials. I know I am like a weak helpless infant in myself. O Lord, in mercy pity me, and enable me to live above the world while I live in it; and may I be prepared for my departure out of it whenever the summons shall come."

"Dec. I hope I enjoy some comfort and support from religion, though I find myself a poor imperfect, sinful creature. I stand in constant need of the aids of the Divine Spirit from above. I am too apt to speak hastily and unadvisedly. It is a great Christian attainment to bridle the tongue at all times, — that unruly

member, — and habitually to live in a calm and dispassionate state of mind, and always to be an imitator of the meek and lowly Saviour. Lord, evermore grant me such a disposition of mind as this, both in my public performances, and in my daily deportment."

"July, 1817. I need clearer evidences that my peace is made with God, though I hope in his infinite mercy through the Redeemer, for the great blessings of pardon and salvation. I think I enjoy some peculiar sweetness in meditating on Divine things, and I hope the worship of God in public and in private is delightful to my soul. But, after all, how vile, how unworthy, how guilty do I appear in the sight of an infinitely pure and holy God."

"Dec. As I advance in life, my time seemingly quickens its pace. The days seem to be scarcely come before they are insensably gone. If time flies thus rapidly, how soon will it waft me off the stage of life! How I shall feel when death shall come, I know not, but the thought of dying often fills me with inward dread, not so much on account of the pains that will attend it, as the fear that I am not united to Christ. I think I have, at times, spiritual comforts; but how small, how inconstant! Can it be, say I frequently to myself, that I, who am so full of sinful imperfections, am prepared for

the pure and perfect society and employments of the upper world? Though I have a fixed and unshaken belief of the great doctrines and truth's contained in Divine revelation, yet I have not that assured hope which I need, that I am interested in the promises of the Gospel."

"Dec. 25th. I think, through the great loving kindness and mercy of God, I have enjoyed more comfort in religion of late, and freedom in conversation with others upon Divine things. My mind has been much more free from dejection and melancholy. 'Bless the Lord, O, my soul and forget not all his benefits.' How great is his goodness to me, a vile, unthankful worm of the dust, which has so often grieved the Holy Spirit, and abused all my light and privileges."

"July, 1820. I think my active days are nearly at an end, and my usefulness, of course, cannot, in ordinary circumstances, be continued much longer. Nor do I feel a desire to out-live my usefulness in the world; but I desire to leave the event with God."

"Feb. 12th, 1821. If I have a principle of pure religion in my heart, it must be like a precious jewel in the midst of a heap of rubbish. How numerous are my sins and imperfections! How marvellous that two things, which are as opposite as light and darkness, should exist in

the same heart at the same time, viz ; the love of God, and such great remains of moral corruption. Had not the word of God informed us, that two so diametrically opposite principles were found in the heart of all Christians, and had not this been described by so good a man as Paul, which he daily realized from his own experience, I should think it impossible for me to be a Christian in my present state. But what gives me encouragement to hope that I am a sincere friend to Christ, is my prevailing delight in the character of God, his law, and his government, and in the truths of his holy word ; and my ardent desire, as I think, to see pure religion flourishing, and prevailing."

"1823. I find the want of spiritual mindedness, and that I am far too fickle in my feelings, I often think I enjoy comfort and sweetness in Divine things, but am apt to lose my good frames, and to be ruffled, at times, by small crossing occurrences. I begin to realize the effects of age and infirmities more and more, which indicate the general decay of my body, and the near approach of my dissolution ; such as increasing debility, deafness, failure of memory, loss of sight, and the difficulty of recognizing the faces and names which have formerly been familiar to me."

"May 8th, 1824. I have long viewed it of

great importance for people to become well established in the belief and practice of the truths of religion in their youth; and so to devote themselves to the service of God, that they may enjoy the support of religion, under the decays and infirmities of old age. I find my memory has greatly failed within a few years, and my mind has become weak, and my thoughts oftentimes much scattered, and especially at the close of the day, when my body is weary. I have had, of late, but little spiritual enjoyment. I feel that I am too cold and formal in my prayers, and, am troubled with wandering thoughts in duty, to such a degree that I often think that I have no grace at all. I pray God in his rich mercy to have compassion upon me, and quicken my soul, which cleaveth to the dust; and that he would undeceive me, if I am deceived, and lift upon me the light of his countenance. I find it a great thing, at all times, and in all company, to maintain a lively sense of religion."

"I feel more and more weaned from the world, I have but small desires to continue long in this world of sin and sorrow; but still I fear that my motives are selfish in living, or in desiring an exchange of worlds. I pray God to search me and try me, and lead me in the way everlasting. I think I long for conformity to the image and will of God."

"I pray for grace so to live as to glorify God in death, by enjoying his gracious, his comforting, and supporting presence in the last moments of my life. It is a most solemn and trying scene to pass through. I have been much exercised how I shall die; but I hope in the God of all grace and consolation, to grant me his Holy Spirit to comfort me in that solemn hour."

"July 27th, 1828. I have for some time, I hope, enjoyed, for the most part, some real comfort in religion, though at times disheartened in my work. I think, that I long for nothing so intensely as saving grace and the quickening and comforting influences of the Holy Ghost. The amazingly rapid flight of time reminds me, very often, that my race will soon end, and I shall be fixed in my final state for Eternity. O, amazing thought! Though I am fully persuaded, that it is my heart's desire to promote pure religion and to see the cause of Christ universally flourishing, yet my want of far greater fervency spiritual mindedness, and more constant devotedness to God's service, fills me with fear and anxiety, lest I should fall short at last."

"Dec. 17th, 1833. How marvellous is God's loving kindness towards me, a poor, guilty, unworthy sinner."

Extracts from his journal breathing the same

spirit with the foregoing, might be greatly extended. But these specimens show the character of his piety, that it was persevering, pervading his whole conduct and commending itself to all who knew him. As the infirmities of age increased upon him, Mr. Vaill made less copious, and less frequent entries in his journal; yet it was continued down nearly to the time of his death, and affords abundant evidence of maturity in Christian experience, and increasing meetness for heaven. In proportion as his heavenly-mindedness increased, and as he approximated towards sinless perfection, his sense of the amazing evil of sin, and of his own unworthiness and dependence upon the grace and strength of Christ seemed to deepen; and, instead of glorying in himself or in any of his past services, he seemed to glory wholly in Christ, and to view himself as a poor, unworthy sinner, redeemed "by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

CHAPTER VIII.

EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL CONTINUED. — Birth-day reflections. Anniversary of his ordination. New Year's reflections. Parochial calls. Spirit of the world. Religious education of children. Parental neglect. Two infidels. Modern mode of settling ministers exceptionable. Hasty admissions to the Church. Young converts.

"To the reflecting and pious mind, anniversary occasions afford desirable opportunities for meditation. Of this sort is the return of the day of one's birth, of the new year, or the entrance on a new relation in life. These occasions are noted in the journal of Mr. Vaill, by the entry of some appropriate reflections. A few extracts are here inserted, as specimens of the use which may be made of such occasions.

"July 14th, 1804. I am this day fifty-three years old! Oh, how has my life glided away like a vapor! Much more than half of my time is doubtless gone, perhaps far the greatest part! And how little have I done to promote the honor of God, and the good of souls! I have reason to fear and tremble, when I reflect upon my barrenness and want of love and zeal in the service of God!"

"July 14th, 1822. This is my birth-day. I am this day seventy-one years of age. Oh! how ought I to be ashamed of my past unprofitable life, and to be humbled in the dust, that I have lived so many years to so little purpose. Though I hope God has improved me as an instrument of some good to souls, and to the church of Christ, yet of what numerous sins and short-comings in duty do I stand chargeable before God! I have abundant cause for the exercise of the warmest gratitude to God for sparing my life so long, and for loading me with innumerable benefits. I have from my childhood enjoyed great privileges beyond many of my acquaintance, and especially for nearly fifty years past.

"How marvellous the goodness of God in calling me away from my parents, and from my native place, where I was surrounded by many vicious youth, and by irreligious neighbors, and in opening a door for me in his Providence to procure a competent education, to be in some measure useful in the ministry! And I now stand on the brink of the grave, and the eternal world; but, blessed be God, if I am not deceived, I enjoy a comfortable hope, that my sins and sorrows will end with my days."

"Sept. 28th, 1822. It is, this day, fifty years since I set out from Litchfield, my native

place, on foot, to travel an hundred and eighty miles, to Dartmouth College, on purpose to procure an education, that I might be permitted to preach the gospel. The time since that period has fled away like a vapor, and I have passed through many new and trying scenes, and have also experienced innumerable mercies. The greater part of those of my relatives and acquaintance, who had then arrived at the age of twenty-five or thirty years, have gone to the grave, and have entered on their eternal state."

"Friday, July 14th, 1826. This is my birth-day. Through the abundant mercy of God, I have been spared to the age of seventy-five years. Multitudes have come and gone off the stage of action since I began my existence. Most of my cotemporaries in early life are numbered in the great congregation. Various and wonderful have been the changes, the labors and hardships through which I have been called to pass. But in looking back upon life, I see reason to lament the sins and follies of my childhood and youth, and that I have lived no more devoted to God in my more advanced age! There can be but a step — but a short space between me and death, and a boundless eternity. Though I have attempted to live a life of religion for more than half a century, yet how far short have I fallen of

what I ought to have done! Though I feel but little desirous of procuring worldly substance, were it in my power, and though I have, for many years, taken up with about half of what is common for a people to give their minister for his salary of late years, yet I find my mind too much encumbered with my worldly affairs. I desire now, by the grace of God, to devote the remainder of my life to his service. I hope and pray, that I may yet see pure religion flourishing among the people of my charge, and in the churches around us, before I end my days on earth."

"July 14th, 1827. This day completes seventy-six years of my life. What abundant cause have I to bless God, that I have lived to see another precious revival among the people of my charge! I hope and pray that it may become general, and that all who have remained in an unconverted state, may now be brought into the kingdom."

REFLECTIONS IN REFERENCE TO HIS ORDINATION.

"Feb. 9th, 1790. This day is just ten years since my ordination. I have reason to lament, that I have had no more success; that I have done no more for God. I have had many discouragements in regard to my unsuccessfulness; but I encourage myself that God has some elect

ones in this place, who have already been called, and therefore conclude, that though the number of Christ's people is small in any place, it is important that they be fed and nourished by the preaching of the word, that they may be prepared for heaven."

"Feb. 9th, 1819. This is the anniversary of my ordination, which was thirty-seven years ago. I preached in the afternoon in reference to the occasion, but the weather being unfavorable for the people to attend, the assembly was not large. How great have been the changes in this period, and how many that once belonged to my charge, have gone to the great congregation! Two hundred and twelve have died in this place since my ordination, besides others that have been lost at sea. I hope God will yet further revive his work in this place, and yet call in all who are now out of Christ. Through increasing infirmities, I find that I cannot sustain weekly conferences through the winter, as I have formerly done. I believe it to be my duty to use all proper means to preserve my health and to lengthen out my usefulness. I wish to do the people all the good in my power, by studying and preaching, and visiting and distributing religious tracts. I have given away, within a short time, upwards of one hundred tracts to the school children

and others. I need a large measure of faith and spiritual-mindedness to prepare me to get above the fears of death. Though I hope I have an interest in Christ, yet alas! how far short do I come of that holy living which God requireth of Christians, and especially of ministers!"

NEW YEAR'S REFLECTIONS.

"Jan. 1st, 1802. Through the abundant goodness of God, I have been preserved another year. Thousands of the human race have passed from time to eternity since the last year began. God only knows whether I have not entered upon the last year of my life. How swiftly is my time passing away, and how poorly do I improve it! Though I cannot tax myself with being idle, my greatest deficiency is the want of an eye single to the glory of God, and not being more engaged in religion. I hope I am a friend of Christ, and that I have been born again; but oh! how small the evidence of Christian fruit do I find in my soul! How little is the life of the Christian manifest in my mortal flesh! If I am not deceived, I take real delight in religion, and in the society and conversation of pious people. I pray for grace so to live as to glorify God in my life, and to enjoy his gracious and comforting presence in the last moments of life."

"Jan. 1804. I feel at the beginning of every year, as though it would be my last. I know a last year of my life must come, and God only knows whether this year is not to be with me the last. Many souls have been launched into eternity during the past year, and many more will doubtless die the present year. O! God, teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom."

"Jan. 1st, 1817. Through the abundant goodness and mercy of God, my life has been prolonged another year. How soon has the year run out! O! what is time! how fleeting! how short! But a small space parts me from eternity. I shall soon exchange worlds. And from increasing infirmities, I ought to feel admonished, that the change will very soon take place. Oh! that I might begin this year with God, and that I may be enabled to live in a more humble and spiritual manner, and to exhibit more of a patient, submissive and useful life. How many millions of the human family have been swept off the stage of life since the last year commenced! And many millions more will fall this present year! Lord, am I among this number, which this year must die? O! prepare me by thine amazing grace for my great and last change. Prepare me, when I depart, to go and be with Christ, which is far

better than to continue in this world of sin, of confusion and distraction."

"Jan. 1819. I have experienced many mercies in the year past, and have abundant reason to bless God. My people have been very kind and liberal to me and my family. They have contributed liberally according to their numbers and ability, for our comfort, knowing that my stated salary is small for the present day, when articles of living are so dear.

I have lately thought, that I have not made Jesus Christ the subject of my preaching, as much as I ought. I am now resolved to dwell more on this subject than I have lately done. I believe it to be the great duty of ministers of the gospel to dwell much upon the character and doctrines of Christ in their public instructions. O! Lord, let the seed of thy word, which I have been endeavoring to sow among this people for many years, spring up and bear fruit to life eternal, if not before, yet after I shall be slumbering in the dust! God is able to raise up instruments to succeed me, which will far better promote his cause than ever I have done."

"Jan., 1824. Through the mercy and loving kindness of God, I am brought to the beginning of a new year. I think at the commencement of every year, that it is probably

my last, and this probability increases as I advance in life, and as my infirmities increase upon me. I know there must be a last year, a last month, a last day, a last hour and moment, with me.

"I have experienced much of divine goodness in the year past, as well as my family. I have not been detained a single half day from public worship, and I have preached every Sabbath, when I have had no assistance from my brethren, and have been enabled to attend a number of lectures and other religious meetings among my own people and abroad. I hope through the grace and mercy of God my usefulness may be continued while my life lasts. But my time is near at hand. O! God, prepare me to meet the awful summons with holy resignation and composure of mind."

"Jan. 1831. I am still alive, and have entered on a new year, under as comfortable circumstances as almost any person of my age. I have abundant cause for thankfulness to my merciful Saviour for his goodness to me and my family; for the health and other temporal, as well as spiritual blessings and privileges, which we have enjoyed. I pray that I may be enabled to devote my spared life wholly to the service of my Redeemer.

I think, every day, of my approaching disso-

lution, and am greatly concerned to be prepared to meet my great change in peace, and to enter upon that rest which is in reserve for the people of God. My prospects for this world are daily lessening. I think I feel in some measure as a weaned child, in regard to all sublunary things. It is my heart's desire and prayer to God, that I may leave the church under my pastoral care, in a united and flourishing state, and that all the unconverted in the place may yet be effectually called and sanctified, and that all my children and grandchildren may be humble followers of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Vaill's infirmities having increased upon him, he was obliged for a season to suspend his public labors about the close of the year 1831, On being able to resume them in January, 1832, he thus expresses himself in his journal.

"I went through the public exercises and returned home, without being greatly exhausted by the labors of the day. I desire to bless God, that he is still enabling me to perform further service for him. I hope by divine aid yet to be able to preach some longer. I have a desire to bring again into view the leading and essential doctrines of the gospel, before I quit the stage of life. I find the doctrines of the

cross are growing unpopular, not only with many who are members of churches, but with a number of ministers who have within a few years been settled in the work."

At another date: "I begin to feel a deep anxiety on account of the present state of the churches. Though there appears to subsist a good degree of union among them in general, yet ,I find some ministerial brethren, and others, members of churches, who appear of late to be carried away with modern popular sentiments, and a style of preaching adopted by some young ministers, that are coming on to the stage. Not a few have forsaken the doctrine of the totally depraved and sinful condition in which we are born into the world. And some have exploded the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit of God, as taught in the sacred scriptures by Christ and his inspired apostles, and as has been taught by the most learned, skilful and pious divines since the reformation. Though these modern preachers profess to hold to regeneration, yet they ascribe too much to human agency, and hold that regeneration is wrought by having the excellency of moral objects presented to the view of the soul, and that sinners are active in effecting the change of their own regeneration; whereas, the work

is set forth by the apostle as being a new creation, which is wrought alone by the Spirit and power of God."

"Confused ideas, or at least incorrect, are advanced by some preachers respecting the inability of sinners to repent, to believe, or to perform any other duty; or, rather, no proper distinction is kept up between natural and moral inability.

"Another evil which is too common, and which I fear is too prevalent with some church members, consists in their placing the whole of religion in certain frames or states of feeling, and in excitements, which are common in revivals of religion."

"Jan. 1833. Another year has speedily passed away, and I am still spared. Though in the spring and summer of the last year, I experienced a distressing sickness; and though the partner of my life, the companion of my youth, with whom I had lived nearly fifty-two years, was severed from me by death, yet I have been spared, and have enjoyed, for the most part, as comfortable health as is common for persons of my age. I wish for clearer evidences that I am a child of God, though I think I am a cordial believer in Christ."

At another date: "I have much depression and gloominess of mind, to which I have been

more or less subject from my youth up. But it will be nothing strange, if these seasons of depression should become more frequent as my age advances, though, through the abundant goodness of God, I have many comfortable hours. I view it as a favor, that my usefulness is in a measure continued, though I have reason to lament, that I bring so little to pass from day to day, and that I have been instrumental of so little good to the souls of those with whom I have so long labored. I have reason to lament my short comings, my sins and my follies, and that I am no more devoted to the work of my sacred calling."

PAROCHIAL CALLS.

"I called upon a man who has lived a very irreligious life nearly sixty years; found him laboring under a very painful lameness; I talked plainly to him upon the concerns of his soul, and reminded him of his past wickedness and present danger. He appeared to be considerably affected in view of his situation, but discovered no symptoms of a deep and genuine repentance. I fear he is a poor hardened sinner, that will never repent and turn to God. I hope he will yet be plucked as a brand out of the burning."

"Called and conversed with a man and his

wife, who are in the younger part of the married life, and appear to have no principle of pure religion by which they are influenced, but to be devoted wholly to the world. I endeavored to press home upon their minds the vast importance of religion. Oh! how amazing the thought, that such a great proportion of people should grow up, marry, and rear up families, without prayer, or any proper government and religious instruction of their children.

"The religious education of children is of the utmost importance. All professors of religion, and all parents who have children under their care, should put forth their united and constant energies to instruct, to counsel and warn the young, and, if possible, by a divine blessing, to form their minds for virtue and religion, and to bring them to the saving knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. The neglect of the great duties which parents and Christians owe to children, appears to be at the bottom of the chief of the ignorance, vice and dissipation of our children and youth. And while this criminal negligence continues, we must expect a growing degeneracy in the rising generation. And their ruin must be principally charged upon parents and teachers, who suffer them to walk in the ways of their own hearts and sight of their own eyes, without employing their united endeavors to reclaim and save them.

"The want of good government and of a religious education in families, if it continue to prevail, will in process of time, ruin this country.

"Many things respecting the state of the church and people have lain with weight upon my mind; such as the great neglect of parents, and especially of parents that are professors of religion, to give their children a faithful Christian education, and my own neglect and that of the church, of the children which have been baptized. These evils, so far as I can learn, are too generally prevaling among churches.

"I have often thought, that in order to have pure religion flourish among a people, the following things are requisite:

"1. That professing Christians should aim at perfect holiness as their standard of duty. Though it is not a fact that any, even the most holy, do, in this life, arrive at sinless perfection, yet that is the mark for which they are to strive. Thus it was with Paul, when he said, 'Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. While such as call themselves Christians are content

with small attainments in holiness, they will remain low, and be mere dwarfs or babes in Christ.

"2. Another thing necessary to promote pure religion is for Christians to attend seriously and conscientiously to the religious education of their children, and to the religion and worship of God in their families. Religion will continue to decline among Christian professors, while so many Christian parents resemble Eli of old in the education of their children, and instead of proper instructions, warnings, counsels and restraints, let them pass with only some slight reproofs, when they make themselves vile; nay, further, while they venture to indulge them in the vain and fashionable amusements of the world.

"It is a painful consideration that many parents, who call themselves the friends of Christ, not only neglect to give their children a religious education, but can send them to schools set up by the unbelieving part of the world, to acquire what are deemed by many necessary refinements. They, like the wicked of old, in the days of Job, 'send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.' And this, after they have solemnly devoted them to God in the ordinance of baptism, and have solemnly covenanted to bring them up for God.

Notwithstanding these solemn transactions, they take their children from the school of Christ, where they ought to be educated, and enter them in that school, where nothing is taught respecting God and Christ, heaven and hell, and respecting the way of life and salvation, but where they are taught only to mimick polite and refined sinners in their gestures and deportment.

In vain may their parents read their Bibles and pray that their children may not enter into temptation, while they send them directly into the most alluring temptations, and give them full license to tread on Satan's ground. O! my God, how is thy holy name profaned! — the Saviour wounded in the house of his friends! How are the good efforts of a preached gospel lost upon the minds of the rising generation, while their Christian parents train them up in such a loose and unbecoming manner!

Professing parents must become awake to the interests of religion, and to the pious education of their children, before we can reasonably expect that religion will be greatly revived. They must imitate the holy example of Abraham, of Joshua, and of all good men, that as for them and theirs, they will serve the Lord."

"Dec. 29, 1811. I have lately had conversation with two infidels, one an old man above

four-score years, the other short of fifty. The old man appears to be fixed in his deistical belief. He pays no regard to the Bible any further than he imagines that it suits his principles. The sight is indeed moving, to see an old sinner on the brink of the grave, denying the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. I went on purpose to talk with him, as he had lately sent for me to attend the funeral of his wife; but my labors appear to have been in vain, as to benefiting him.

"The other man is much on the reserve in conversation, but appears at present to be on the side of deism. I hope in a merciful God, that he will yet open the eyes of both to see their delusion, and pluck them as brands out of the fire.

"I find the same persecuting spirit operating in the wicked, and manifested by them in every age. How certain it is, that where ministers are in any good measure faithful, they will bring on themselves the bitter hatred of a wicked world. If they 'have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!' But I pray God to give me grace to stand firm in the cause of the Redeemer, and that I may never swerve from the truth through fear of giving offence to men of the world."

"Lord's day, March 17th, 1815. I preached upon the doctrine of the decrees. I understand that several persons are much disturbed with the doctrine of foreordination. One man, I heard, ranked me among false teachers, another called it a cursed doctrine! How amazing the ignorance, the blindness and prejudices of sinners to genuine gospel truths, and to the real character of God! I view the denial of the doctrine of the decrees as amounting to a denial of God's perfections and government. But still none can be reconciled to the doctrine, till reconciled to God."

The following entry was made in his journal in 1832. It shows how he regarded the modern practice of churches in inviting candidates for the gospel ministry to become their pastors, with only slight acquaintance with them. In the case which occurred, the call was given by the church and society to the candidate after hearing him preach only one Sabbath, and was accepted by the candidate. In view of this case, which fell under his own observation, Mr. Vaill expresses himself thus: "This move is in my opinion far too sudden. The settlement of a gospel minister over a church and congregation, is a transaction far too solemn and important to be done in a hasty manner. And though a man has been settled over a church

previously to his settlement in another place, yet they who invite him in the second instance to become their pastor, ought to prove him before his settlement among them, though his character stood fair where he labored before. Every church that is about to have a pastor set over them in the Lord, ought to know whether he is sound in the faith; whether he is a man of experimental piety, so far as they can judge from acquaintance with him; and whether he is apt to teach, and whether his manner of preaching and conversing with his people appears to be for godly edifying. The minister who is called to a particular charge, ought also to gain some acquaintance with the state and ways of the people who have invited him to become their pastor.

"The times are greatly altered as it respects calling and settling ministers, from what they were thirty or forty years ago. The churches have become far too lax and hasty in this solemn and weighty business, in my opinion. The mode of preaching is also altered. Young ministers who enter into the vineyard now, seem to aim to be popular in their manner of sermonizing and delivering, and to show themselves off, while, in many instances, they too much neglect the most essential doctrines. In some instances, they intermingle erroneous sen-

timents in their preaching, as it respects the depravity of infants, and the work of regeneration.

"And in this period of frequent revivals and numerous sudden conversions, many ministers and churches are far too hasty in admitting young converts to their communion. Some are thus hastily admitted, who, before their hopeful conversion, were greatly ignorant of the fundamental principles of the gospel, and who of course remain in great ignorance, and prove unstable as water, while they are liable to embrace every error that is afloat.

"Another practice which I regard as injurious to the cause of religion, which has obtained in many places, is calling on young converts to take the lead in prayer at religious meetings, as soon as they begin to indulge hope that they have experienced a change by the Spirit of God. Should they be sincere, and prove genuine in their experience, they are as yet mere novices, babes in Christ, and but poorly qualified to lead in so solemn an exercise as prayer. And in many cases, such as appeared well for a season, turn out stony ground converts. In my opinion, for a general rule, no person ought to become a leader in prayer, till he is viewed qualified to be received into the church, or does actually make a public profession of religion.

Until this is done, he is not to be viewed as a visible Christian, but still belongs to the world. Though there may be exceptions to this general rule, yet I believe that such exceptions seldom occur. But it is the nature of imperfect, depraved men to err, and in seasons of general excitement in religion, to exercise zeal, which is not according to knowledge.

CHAPTER IX.

EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL CONTINUED.—His despondence. Trials and discouragements. Thinks of asking for a dismission. The Church conformed to the world. Meets with opposition as school visiter. Commits his cause to God. Low state of Religion. The ministry attended with trials. Faults of ministers and of church-members. Reformation desirable. Addresses the Church on their renewal of covenant.

IN view of great declension. "February 7th, 1802. O! God, in what a deplorable situation are we in this place. Such striking proofs of our want of religion, of our stupidity and awful indifference, sink me down, and drink up my spirits. I feel oft times as though I could labor no more for the salvation of this people. The power of God, however, can cause the spiritually dead to live. O! come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; help my unbelief; revive my drooping spirits, and quicken me more abundantly to my duty! O! come thou, Eternal Spirit, and breathe the breath of spiritual life into these lifeless souls of ours!

"I sometimes doubt whether it is my duty to continue with this people, when I take a view of their inattention to the institutions of the gospel, their indifference in regard to gospel privileges, and the great embarrassments under which I labor in regard to my support; and when I consider how many destitute places there are, where the people earnestly desire preaching; but I wish to submit the matter to the Judge of all the earth."

"November 14th, 1802. I am too apt to judge of the state and event of things according to present feelings and prospects. I have had serious apprehensions of late that this small society would come to speedy dissolution. I know not but that it will be the case; I believe we are fast ripening for some great event. God will visit us with his holy spirit to reform us, or he will leave us to confusion of face. I hope and pray that the former may be our happy lot. It hath appeared among the mysterious things in Divine Providence, that my labors have proved so unsuccessful in this place. It is now above twenty years since I was settled here in the work of the ministry, and but a small number have been hopefully converted under my ministry. I think, amid all my imperfections and short-comings, I have endeavored to set before the people all those doctrines

and duties which I have viewed essential to their salvation. And from my little apparent success, I am led to fear at times that I am not called to this work, or have not been faithful in it. But God is infinitely wise; he knows what is best to be done. I hope and pray that before my race is ended, I may see the sinking church and cause of God rising and gloriously flourishing. And amidst all the darkness and discouragement which attend this people, I still hope and earnestly pray that religion may be revived."

"April 2d, 1803. I have felt of late overwhelmed with discouragements. The most discouraging thing is the low state of the church; their want of union; their want of brotherly love and charity one towards another. I am ready many times to conclude it my duty to leave this people on account of the little benefit I seem to be to them, but I would wait on God for direction. I hope still in the boundless mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, that he will visit us with the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. O! Lord, direct me in the way of my duty; make the path way of it plain before me! Shall I leave this people and go into another part of thy vineyard, or shall I remain with them? Oh! for light and direction. I am on the point of giving

out, and of asking for a dismission from the church and people of my charge, as there appears but small prospect of my usefulness among them. I am very loath to break up, or to do any thing which will tend to break up, this society. I shall be sorry to leave such as I hope are the friends of Christ and lovers of the truth. I trust God will afford me light and direction in the way of my duty."

"Dec. 30th, 1803. We live in a world of great trial; and among those evils which are suffered to take place among men, slander or casting out their names as evil, is one. There is no person, who, by his profession and practice, sets out conscientiously in vindication of the religion and honor of Jesus Christ, but who will be greatly hated and reviled by many. And upon none will the reproaches of the wicked fall so heavily as upon ministers of the gospel, and especially if they labor to imitate their Divine Master in their preaching and practice. Though I fall infinitely short of my duty, and deserve ten thousand censures from my fellow men, yet I perceive that I get ten reproaches for doing my duty, where I receive one for my neglect of it, or my short-comings in it."

"March 24th, 1804. The trials of ministers who love the cause of religion, and who labor

to be faithful, must be great. Whether I am sincere or not, I find many trials to encounter. And new ones, in some respects, arise from time to time. The stupidity of the people of my charge, and my little success among them in promoting pure religion, have been a great trial to me; but the greatest discouragement at the present time is in the apparently low state of piety among the members of the church. There can be but little religion, where there is but little brotherly love and tenderness in the members of a church, one towards another. Such a spirit of division and bitterness, has broken out among some of the male members, that there appears but small prospect that religion can flourish among us at present. One male member in particular, has conceived such bitterness against a brother, that he threatens to leave us. In this he discovers a temper that is altogether unchristian, as he has never been to converse with said brother, and attempt a reconciliation in a gospel way. It is to me a great trial, but I have this consolation, that the Lord reigns, and that he can dispose all these events in a manner to advance his own glory. I pray God to be prepared for that world where there will be no wicked nor selfish inhabitants, and where I may have mine

own heart perfectly delivered from selfishness. Heaven must be a most desirable place to all who love God and the Redeemer, and those who bear his moral image."

"March 30th. I feel that late trials will do me much good. I think I am stirred up to pray more earnestly and fervently for my people, and I hope they will see their want of more religion, and be led to seek for mercy. I think I could pass through any hardships or labors which I am capable of enduring, cheerfully, if I could see the people of my charge profiting spiritually by my ministry, and could find religion reviving and flourishing among them."

"Feb. 4th, 1805. Though the mode of settling and supporting ministers, adopted in Connecticut, even from the beginning, is doubtless conducive to good government, and to the temporal prosperity of people in general, yet I have serious doubts whether it is the most beneficial to vital religion, and to the highest prosperity of Christ's kingdom. According to the observations I have made since I entered on the ministry, this mode of settling and maintaining ministers opens the door for unsound and graceless men to enter on the sacred work; as it is viewed an honorable calling, and in

some instances, it becomes lucrative; though, in general, ministers are far from being rich or in affluent circumstances.

"It also gives opportunity for the men of this world, who contribute largely for the support of ministers, to have an undue influence over them. It is to be feared that some at least who go into the ministry, are afraid to declare the whole counsel of God, lest they should offend their more influential, rich parishoners, who may be enemies to the doctrines of grace.

"The church is also injured, as it is placed in a too dependent condition upon the world. In general, those who pay taxes for the support of ministers in parishes, are a great majority. And, though such as are not members of the church, do nothing directly in ecclesiastical matters, yet they will be liable to be offended both with the church and pastor, if they hold to doctrines contrary to their feelings, or administer strict gospel discipline, when it affects any of their friends, or does not accord with their sentiments.

"But what is the line of duty I ought to pursue in my present situation? To leave the people of my charge, must throw them into a very broken condition. It is probable they will be like sheep without a shepherd; but at

present, I feel like a shepherd without sheep. How much do I stand alone in attempting to promote religion among this people! O! how do I long for some Aaron and Hur to hold up my hands; for some zealous and judicious friends to Christ and to souls, to aid me by their prayers and labors! It seems that if that were the case, I should have more hope that God would meet with us, and grant the influences of his Holy Spirit. Last Wednesday attended a religious conference at my own house; had about twenty, pricipally women and children; two male members of the church came before the meeting was closed. But why do I look to instruments and means so much? Though these are to be used, yet, O! God, the work is thine! To thee I look! To thee would I cry day and night for the influences of thy grace!"

At another date: "I have found a new discouragement in my work of late, if it ought to be viewed as such. I have been for several years, one of the directors or visiters of the common schools in this place. I have endeavored to act in some measure a faithful part in examining such as are introduced as candidates for instructors, and in attending to their qualifications; and when I have gone to visit the schools as the law directs, I have seriously ad-

dressed the children before I left them, on the subject of good manners, morals and religion. I understand that some persons are dissatisfied with me, and wish me off from the board of visiters, pretending that it is not my place; others insinuate that it is not the time to say any thing to the children on the subject of religion; others allege that I am too strict in my religion; and in my instructions. Oh, what a lamentable state must a people be in, when parents are unwilling to have their children taught the great concerns of their souls, and when they are neither willing to go into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor to suffer their children to enter! But shall I shrink back through fear of man? God forbid. While my reason, my health, and strength remain, I will endeavor to speak for God and to instruct and warn the people of my charge, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear."

"March 1st, 1808. I think I feel willing to cast all my concerns and cares upon the Lord and to take up with the allotments of Divine Providence. I wish not to aspire after any earthly enjoyments, which may be inconsistent with my spiritual well being and my usefulness as a minister. I have for many years, as I think, been consulting the most solid and important interests of my family. I have labored to

give my children a good education both as it respects civil and religious instruction, and have not attempted to move in a large or fashionable circle. Indeed but few ministers can have sufficient support from their people, to equal the customs of the world in their mode of living. Nor would I wish it. I think when a minister appears as eager after the high and fashionable things of the world, as do unbelievers, that it tends greatly to destroy his influence as a minister of the Gospel, and as a man of piety, upon the minds of his people. He may be treated with more respect, or receive more adulation perhaps from a fashionable class of unbelievers, but after all, to what does it amount? To be a follower of Christ, who was meek and lowly in heart, and to convince them, by his daily example, that he believes what he preaches to others; to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man; so to live and so to preach as to be instrumental of the conversion and salvation of many of his hearers; are objects of inconceivably more importance to a minister of the Gospel, than a world full of silver and gold, or than all the honors and applauses of the great ones of the earth. I am not at all anxious about loosing the honors or respect of the world, if I can only approve myself to

God, and be instrumental of saving precious souls."

"I am more and more convinced of the great importance, that preachers of the Gospel should deliver to their hearers plain truths and in a plain manner. I know however, that the blessing must come from God, but there are ways of delivery, no doubt, calculated to gain the attention. I have made but very little use of notes in public, since I returned from my mission, and I think the attention is greater, though it is still the work of God to set the word home on the consciences of people."

"March 18, 1808. The work of the ministry is indeed a great and difficult work. A minister of the Gospel has to combat the pride, the prejudices and ignorance of many. If he preach the sound, distinguishing doctrines of grace, the carnal and selfish feelings of many of his hearers will be deeply wounded; if he preach smooth things he will wrong, nay starve the children of God as well as dishonor his Saviour and wound, if not destroy, his own soul.

"When churches are sunk into a low state, and have gone on in a formal traditionary way, how difficult is it to bring about a reformation. The attempts of ministers to introduce a more strict discipline, and to be more thorough in the examination of candidates for admission to the

church, constitute a work of no small difficulty. How soon will a minister, in such an attempt, be branded as an innovator, as one that is departing from the good old way of the fathers, or as resembling the New Lights. But why should any one, who acts as an ambasssador for Christ, fear the face of man, who "is a worm, or the son of man that shall die?"

At another date. "I fear the religion of a great number of professors, as well as of some ministers of this age, will not bear the scrutiny of the final Judge. As there has been no open persecution of professed Christians, for many generations, churches have degenerated, and sunk into a sinful conformity to the world. In such a time as this, when there is no great cross to be taken up by those who call themselves believers in Christ, and when to be a member of the Church is somewhat respectable, many, it is to be expected, will profess to be Christians, who are only so in name. And when ministers have the aid, and patronage of civil rulers, some it is to be feared will go into the ministry for *filthy lucre's sake*, or that they may gain reputation among men; and hence it is to be feared, that some in the ministry are ignorant of the *new birth*, who have studied divinity perhaps, through the influence of worldly motives, and whose motives and tastes still savor of the spirit of the world. Such will labor

to equal and please the most polite and refined class of their hearers; they will compose and deliver eloquent discourses, and display their ingenuity and ability, and set themselves off! But where is the humility of such preachers? Where is their meekness, their self-denial, where their fervent love to Christ and his cause and to precious souls? Where is their spiritual mindedness, their Christian walk? Alas, in these things, such preachers must be miserably deficient!"

"April 1815. I am more and more convinced that those ministers, who are the most useful to their fellow men, in promoting their spiritual interests, are they who make the least parade and bustle about it. The Saviour was not disposed to make a great figure among the people. Those public teachers in religion, who make the greatest show and acquire the greatest popularity, have often more sound than substance. If I know my own heart, I wish to promote the spiritual interests of my fellow men, but it is of but small consequence, whether it be known till the day of judgment, to what degree I or any other minister has been useful. I have reason to fear, that I have done but little good since I have been in the ministry. Still I hope through the blessing of God, I have been instrumental of awakening some sinners, and of promoting the edification of some Christians.

"O, how important that ministers be wide awake in the business of their Lord and Master, and that they labor and preach, from time to time, as though it were their last day, or their last opportunity. Would ministers hope for success, they must not only teach their people publicly, but also from house to house. They must not fashion themselves according to the course of this world, nor cultivate a taste for a refined and sumptuous mode of living, which savors of the things, that be of men, and not the things that be of God. They must convince the people, not only by their preaching, but by their daily conduct, that their treasure is in heaven, and that it is their great desire and prayer to God, that the souls of their people may be saved.

"There is utterly a fault, to some extent, among ministers at the present day. Though they in general preach and pray well, yet they too much neglect private labors, and serious conversation among the people. Some who enter the ministry, seem too anxious to support their dignity, in ways opposed to the spirit of the Gospel The way for ministers to maintain true dignity is to be eminently holy. Though fashionable people of the world, show them seeming respect, for their conformity to the maxims and customs of the world, yet, at the

same time, such fashionable people often despise ministers in their hearts, for practicing this very conformity. There is no so great dignity attending human nature, as to treat with becoming apathy and neglect the light and trifling things of the world. This the Son of God exemplified in its perfection, while in the flesh. So far as his ministers imitate his example, they will maintain true dignity. No matter if a haughty and proud world despise them and reproach them; when brought to see things in their true light, men of the world will be convinced of their mistake and change their voice.

"I have long felt, that it is comparatively of small consequence, whether ministers or private Christians are much carressed by the gay and fashionable part of society. Nay in many instances it proves a snare and a trap to be caressed or promoted as the honorable among men. The remaining pride of good men needs no fuel to feed it. If they are faithful as servants of Jesus Christ, it is enough. He will own them at the last great day. Yet, alas, how often does it happen, that there is something like strife among the ministers of the Gospel, as there was among the disciples of Christ, when they strove to see which should be the greatest. Like the learned among the Jews, many seem fond of being complimented with honorary titles

and with the epithet of *Rabbi*. Lord what is man, feeble dying man! What amazing weakness is discovered in imperfectly holy men, in this life!"

"Dec. 1818. I have often thought upon the different courses which ministers and others in public stations, pursue, while professedly attempting to do good to their fellow men. Some who are placed as Pastors and Ministers, make a much greater figure, become more popular and renowned than others, who perhaps are their equals in talents and piety, but do not affect so much display and zeal, and are far from rendering themselves objects of admiration among the learned. But men who are possessed of the most brilliant and popular talents, or who make the greatest display, are not generally the most useful, or successful in their work. It was foretold of Christ, that he should not strive, nor cry, neither should any man hear his voice in the streets. Yet he was fervent and constant in his zeal for God; but he was far from being boisterous in his manner, as is too much the case with some, who call themselves his ministers in this age.

"It fills me with disgust when I see a preacher of the Gospel laboring to bring into view his gifts and to set himself off to advantage in prayer, by using very lofty expressions, or

throwing up his hands, stretching wide his arms, straining open his eyes with his face turned upward, or by lengthening out his prayer beyond what the occasion requires; or, when preaching, to use those flourishes and gestures, which answer no other purpose than to draw the attention of the audience to the man, and not to the subject matter which he is treating. Equally disgustful is it to me to see a speaker thump loudly on the desk with his Bible or fist. But why do I speak of others, or object to things in this manner, when I am so imperfect in myself, and but little useful to my fellow men? Alas, how much pride is intermingled in my most sacred services! O Lord, humble me and prepare me to spend the remainder of my days in thy more immediate service."

"Oct. 1825. It is a melancholy consideration, that professors of religion, at the present day, seem, many of them at least, to be governed by a worldly spirit. But few comparatively appear to maintain a humble, conscientious walk with God. The greater part are too much influenced by the spirit of the world, and carried away by the false glare of its honors and riches. So long as this is the case, but little can be done to make them feel their obligations to love one another, and to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and to maintain

Gospel discipline. If this is attempted for breaches of the divine rule, it has become too common for persons in and out of the Church, to take sides with the members concerned, or against them, which bears a striking resemblance to the people of the world.

"After attending a religious meeting, I proposed that all present, who were disposed, should contribute to purchase religious Tracts, to distribute among the school children and others. Two young men present made light of the subject, and conducted in a very unbecoming manner. I hope the Lord will have mercy upon them, that he will open their eyes to see their state of sin and guilt, and bring them to repentance, before they plunge into endless torment. And that he will prevent them from having a corrupting influence upon others. The time has arrived when such profligate characters are multiplying; and this appears to be the consequence of the great criminality of parents in neglecting the pious education, and good government of their children. And in this way, by neglect of their duty, thousands are training up their children for destruction.

"We have a set of children and youth growing up among us, who have, or appear to have no fear of God before their eyes. Most of

them, I fear are but poorly governed and taught by their parents. This fills me, at times, with gloomy apprehensions concerning the people in future, but I must be faithful and leave the event with God."

"Dec. 17th, 1826. I have many painful exercises from day to day, in thinking of the deplorable condition of many of my people, who I have reason to fear, are living in an unconverted state, and I fear this is the unhappy condition of some, who are members of the visible church. Many professors of religion, at the present day, seem strangely to have deviated from the spirit and practice of genuine Christianity, as taught and practiced in the Apostolic age. But I hope and pray, that God in his infinite mercy will speedily purify and reform his churches, as well as those, who are placed over them as Pastors. Indeed many of the ministers and churches are in a more promising state than they were about half a century ago.

"As revivals of religion have been multiplied in many places, the number of zealous and devoted Christians has increased, yet many, who call themselves the friends of Christ, continue in a low and languid state. A sinful conformity to the world, and want of holy zeal and engagedness in attending on the Institutions of

the Gospel, are fearfully prevalent with too many, who call Christ their Lord and Master."

In the year 1830, the church in Hadlyme, renewed covenant in a public manner. This was done at that period, to a considerable extent, in the churches of Connecticut, in connexion with a Conference of Churches. This occasion is noted by Mr. Vaill in his journal, and a summary given of his address to the church.

"I did not preach on the occasion, but first made observations on the propriety of the transaction. I then called upon the members of the church to come into the aisles, they accordingly complied, and remained standing, while I read the articles of faith and covenant, to which they renewed their assent in a solemn manner. I then addressed them seriously upon the importance of keeping up a humble walk with God daily, and I gave them such directions as the following, for this purpose.

"1 That they should arise early from their beds in the morning.

"2. That as soon as they should find opportunity, they should read some portion of God's word, and retire for secret prayer.

"3. That they should pay a regular and constant attendance on family worship.

"4. That they should endeavor to have their thoughts and inclinations upon divine things, as

far as should be consistent, while their hands are employed in their secular concerns.

"5. That they should close the day as they began it, by reading, self-examination, and prayer.

"6. That when professing Christians meet in friendly intercourse, they should engage in serious and profitable conversation."

CHAPTER X.

Extracts from his journal continued — miscellaneous. Extracts from a few of his letters — miscellaneous.

"FEB. 1781. Last Lord's day, I attempted to preach against some sinful customs and practices, which seem to prevail of late among our young people. My text was in Genesis 39 : 9. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God. I understood that some disliked my discourse, and said that I meddled with that which was none of my business: but this is nothing uncommon. It is my business and the business of every minister of the Gospel, to bear testimony against every thing, that is contrary to the Gospel.

"Feb. 17th, 1790. It appears to me of late, that many persons are falling away to infidelity, and some who once appeared to be believers in revelation and to respect religion, are now greatly changed, and appear to have lost all

their former respect for the Gospel. But however trying this is to every one who loves Christ and religion, yet this consideration gives me comfort, that the Lord reigneth, and that he will finally gather in all his elect."

"April 6th, 1791. I have lately felt a great weight upon my mind in regard to the greatness of my work, when I look round and find how much is to be done and how many difficulties attend the faithful discharge of duty. I am greatly depressed, but desponding thoughts are sinful and reflect upon the power of Christ, the Supreme Head of the Church, and I would not allow myself to indulge them."

"Oct. 21st, 1801. Yesterday I was present where a company was collected to launch a vessel, and heard a number of profane oaths. Oh, how painful to one who fears God and loves the souls of men, to see them exhibiting open evidence, by their language, that they are in the broad way to eternal destruction! How painful the thought of living with the irreligious forever! Whether I have any right principle at heart or not, I think I am a companion of them, that fear God, or that I take far more pleasure in their society than in that of the wicked."

"March 25th, 1803. I cannot approve of the method in which some Christian people con-

duct their religious meetings, in giving license for every body to speak and to exhort. Though I think it proper for Christians, who are persons of knowledge and experience, at suitable times to give a word of exhortation, yet to encourage all to speak and exhort, and to tell what they think, and how they feel, and to exhibit their feelings as a rule to others, opens the door for the ignorant and inexperienced, who in such cases are commonly the most forward exhorters, and many of them appear to discover a spirit of pride and great self importance. Moreover it tends to confusion to have so many speaking at once or in the same meeting, and thus the minds of many, who are unacquainted with the truths of religion, are distracted and darkened. Besides, the adversary is a subtle enemy and is ready to influence people under a show of religion and zeal, that is the offspring of pride, to harm themselves or others."

"Nov. 23d, 1805. I was never more sensible of the shortness of time, than I have been of late. There seems to be but a very small space betwixt one Sabbath and another. I am busily employed from one day to another, but the great thing is to be found in Christ's service. I find that my mind is far too much engaged in the concerns of this present life. It is always my desire to provide things com-

fortable for the subsistence of my family, and at the approach of winter, it appears necessary to make some provision for their support. But why should I or any other person, who professes to believe in Christ, and to have a treasure in heaven, be anxious for the concerns of this mortal life! I do not feel desirous to procure a large property, as I think, but only to make myself and family comfortable, and to prepare them for usefulness. But perhaps I am deceived, as no person ever coveted the whole world at once. People in general deceive themselves in regard to their love of this world, but as they are prospered, and their substance is increased, their desires for wealth increase, until they become boundless as the ocean. I feel more concerned, when I think seriously on the subject as I often do, about the souls of my children and yet I am far from laboring as I ought for their salvation."

"Dec. 9th. The state of the people in this place and in New England, as well as throughout the United States, is very alarming. And we have reason to conclude, that the inhabitants of the world are, in general, in a state of estrangement from God. Though there are, no doubt, many sincere Christians scattered up and down on the earth, yet how small the number, when compared with those who are living the ene-

mies of God. The thought of one soul perishing forever, is very dreadful! How shocking the thought of the endless perdition of millions of millions! How should this arouse every preacher of the Gospel to fidelity, to labor in season and out of season, to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ!

"Feb. 18th, 1808. I know it is infinitely easy with God to awaken and convert sinners. All my hope is in his sovereign mercy through Jesus Christ.

"I think, however, that ministers ought to preach the most plain and searching truths and to labor, as much as in them lies, to reach the consciences of their hearers. I have no opinion of a general, smooth way of preaching. I know this will be the most popular and congenial to the feelings of the carnal heart, but it is infinitely dangerous to the souls of men."

"Nov. 24th, 1809. I have been in ministerial labors oft within the two years and a half past: including my mission to the New Settlements. I believe I have preached not far from six hundred times. I have had much freedom frequently in the exercises of prayer and preaching, and hope by what I can learn that I have been the instrument of the awakening and conversion of a number of souls; but this, I am deeply sensible, will do nothing towards recom-

mending me to God or saving me. If I come short of a new heart and of an interest in Christ, after having preached to others, I myself must be a castaway; but I hope in the infinite mercy of God, through the Redeemer, that he will make me a monument of his everlasting mercy."

"Jan. 26th 1810. Last Wednesday, I attended a religious meeting, and not having selected any subject in particular, beforehand, while on my way I concluded I would discourse on the following points, viz. *whether sinners are ever brought to embrace the Saviour, without experiencing a painful and thorough conviction of their sin and guilt; and whether any could be saved without conversion?*

I spoke with uncommon freedom, and the people present apparently gave good attention.

"I was lately disturbed in my mind on hearing of the appointment of a ball in the place. This is Satan's doing and it is odious in mine eyes. There is nothing, I conceive, which has a more direct tendency to render the minds of people light and to grieve the Holy Spirit than such amusements. I hope God by visiting us with the Holy Spirit, will put a stop to this and other unfruitful works of darkness!"

Funeral of a drunkard; "Feb. 15th, 1812. Was called this week to attend a funeral, the circumstances of which were truly affecting to

all serious minds. The man who died was more than sixty years of age. He had a wife and left a number of children. He had from his youth up been a very intemperate person. He was often intoxicated, and in fits of intoxication his life had been frequently endangered, and at length in one of these he died, died alone in a tipling shop, where he was locked in to remain for the night, because too much intoxicated to be got home. Loose companions had been drinking with him, and left him so overcome with liquor, that he fell asleep in his chair. The owner of the Store also left him in this condition, and closed his store. On opening his store on the following morning, he found his customer dead. His Lord had come in a day, when he looked not for him and in an hour, when he was not aware, and cut him asunder! The circumstances which attended this man's death, and the frequent meetings of an intemperate club in that neighborhood, led me to preach at his funeral from the following solemn words of Christ, *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day came upon you unawares.* Luke xxii: 34.

"I attempted to show that surfeiting and drunkenness and excessive cares of this life wholly unfit people for their Lord's coming; and in

the improvement made a close address to persons, who are inclined to intemperate practices and gave them a solemn warning.

"The discourse was approved by the serious and judicious, but highly censured as I understand by the intemperate and by certain people of the looser sort, who have little or no sense of the aggravated evil of this or any other sin in the sight of God, or of accountability to their Maker.

"It was attended with no small self-denial for me, to do as I did on this occasion. Had I yielded to the fear of giving offence, I should not have improved this Providence in this manner; but I listened as I thought to the call of God, in his word, and to conscience thus to warn the wicked; and I leave the event with God, hoping and praying that he will render the occasion and the discourse of special benefit to some precious souls, and that he will, by the display of his sovereign grace, pluck sinners who are sunk into the depths of wickedness as brands from the burning. And what increased the call for such a subject was this, almost all the near connections are intemperate. The evil is greatly increasing in our country, and multitudes of both sexes are in great danger of being ruined by the brutish sin of drunkenness."

"Feb. 24th, 1830. I feel many times painful sensations, when I take a view of the very

deplorable condition of such as are in a Christless state. I am encouraged to hope, however, for the conversion of such, from the revealed methods of God's grace, and the omnipotence of his power. The following declaration by the Prophet Isaiah is encouraging. God speaking by the Prophet, saith, "I will bring the blind by a way, that they knew not: I will lead them in paths, that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them and crooked things strait. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them."—Isaiah xlii: 16.

"God led his ancient people in this manner in their journeyings in the wilderness for forty years. And we may trace in Gods dealings with them, a striking resemblance, as it respects his sovereignty, and mysterious wisdom, to his bringing sinners to the saving knowledge of himself at this day. It is his ordinary method to conduct his chosen people to the New Jerusalem in that course which is calculated to prove them, to try them, and to teach them more abundantly, to prize that blessed rest, which remains for his faithful servants."

EXTRACTS FROM A FEW OF HIS LETTERS.

The first is from a letter addressed to his eldest son, soon after his ordination at North-Guilford, dated Hadlyme, March 28th, 1809.

"My Dear Son; You are now settled over a church and congregation, as their Pastor and Minister. You will no doubt have trials and discouragements in the progress of your ministry, both as it respects the means of living and your usefulness to your people. I passed through similar trials and discouragements in the early part of my ministry at Hadlyme, and was sometimes ready to wish, as you seem to do, that I was again at liberty: but it will not be long before your feelings will be different. I wish you not to harbor a thought for a moment, that you shall not long continue with your people. Such feelings will deprive you of much comfort and greatly obstruct your usefulness.

"'Let every man abide in his calling with God.' Though in most men there are strong desires to act in more conspicuous stations, yet such desires will abate, in such as are governed by a Christian temper and the holy truths of Christianity, as they advance in life and as they gain a more thorough knowledge of the temper, maxims and ways of the world.

"The children of ministers who live in cities and populous towns, are often greatly injured in their education. Not being trained to labor and habits of industry, nor taught economy, as they might be in the country, and being exposed to temptations to extravagance in various

ways in society, they often imbibe a wrong spirit or get high notions or false views, which go to unfit them for usefulness in life.

"Whatever trials or discouragements have attended my life or my family, by my settling in the small Society of Hadlyme, I am fully convinced that the manner in which my children have been trained up, has been far better calculated to prepare them for real usefulness in life, than if they had been educated in a clergyman's family in some populous town or city. The gay and fashionable circles in such places, in which the children of ministers will have opportunity to mingle, must prove very injurious to their early tastes and manners as well as morals.

"It may excite in a clergyman who is settled in a small country parish, some disagreeable feelings, perhaps, at times, to hear of the celebrity of Doctor such a one, at New York, or Philadelphia, who has some thousands under his care, and fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars salary per annum. But who can tell that the poor country clergyman will not, in the last day, be found more faithful than the other, or that it will not then appear that the former has been instrumental of bringing more souls to heaven than the latter? And if so, the country minister will receive the more glorious

reward, and will shine the brightest in the kingdom of his Father.

"No minister can determine where he can be instrumental of doing the most good, by any other rule than to follow the calls and leadings of Providence. His own opinion, or that of friends of worth, that his abilities deserve a more important station, is frequently not founded upon the most solid reasoning. It is certainly much more honorable to deserve a higher station than to be placed in one too high for a man's abilities. But there is something extremely vague and erroneous in the ideas men frequently entertain of high stations. It is one thing to be placed in what the world deems a high station, and another to be in that, which is really so, according to the word of God. John the Baptist was in a far higher station, when he came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, clad in his camels' hair garment, and his leathern girdle about his loins, living upon locusts and wild honey, than Herod or Cæsar at the head of their respective governments. A minister settled in the smallest village in New England is, in a Scriptural sense, as really in a high station, as one settled in the City of London. As the former, if he be a man of true piety and fidelity, is as really a Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, and an ambassador of Christ, as the latter. The

difference is, the London minister lives in the midst of a more wealthy, honorable and great people, and, in the view of the world, is in a far more eligible situation. But the obscure country clergyman may far outshine the London minister in the day when God shall make up his jewels. As this life is but a small space of our existence, our chief happiness must consist in making provision for our eternal well-being. I hope God may bless, guide and direct you, and prepare you to do and suffer his will faithfully unto death, that you may share in the rewards of grace and glory, in the world to come!

"From your father, who always sincerely wishes and prays for your spiritual prosperity.

JOSEPH VAILL."

The following extracts are from letters to his youngest son.

The first is from a letter, dated Jan. 30th, 1812, addressed to this son, soon after leaving College. "I conclude, My Dear Son, you still continue to look forward to the work of the ministry. It certainly is a most important and blessed work. But such are the difficulties, so great the trials that attend it, surely ministers ought not only to be men of grace, but to be *eminently pious.* They should not only be humble but should be *clothed with humility.* Not only is it important that they be well studied in the

theory of divinity, but that they also possess a thorough experimental knowledge of vital godliness. How melancholy the condition of a preacher, who shall undertake to guide others to heaven, while he himself is wholly unacquainted with the road! No one who is preparing to enter the sacred work can be too well acquainted with his own heart or with the sacred scriptures. No one can read and study them too much, nor be too frequently, nor fervently engaged in the duty of prayer; nor 'keep too great a distance from the temptations, snares and pollutions of the world.'"

To the same son at a later date and after his settlement in the ministry, he writes: "My Son, be awake in the cause of your divine Master, be spiritually-minded, be sober, be vigilant, be fervent in prayer. Lay aside all levity, it is worse than chaff. Visit your people as much and as generally as lies in your power, but avoid making and returning fashionable formal *tea visits*. They are hurtful things to religion."

At another date, to the same. "Your letter was received. We always rejoice to hear of the welfare of our children, but are much more pleased when we have reason to hope, that they are enjoying prosperity of soul. Nothing can afford Christian parents greater joy, than to hear that their children are walking in the truth,

that they are improving their time, their health, their strength and all their powers in building up the Redeemer's kingdom, and in ripening for glory. To pursue a course like this, persons must be *singular* and pass through much self-denial. When it has become customary for multitudes of professors and no small portion of such as belong to the sacred office, to be liberal in their religious sentiments and sinfully conform to the maxims of the wicked and refined world, the pure doctrines and precepts of Jesus Christ, cannot be maintained without great Christian fortitude, tempered with humility and patience, and accompanied with a lively faith in the Redeemer and in things unseen and eternal."

Under another date, writing to this son and his companion, after giving some details of a work of grace among the people of his charge, he says; "What God designs further, for us, we know not, but how ought we to bless his holy name and to adore his sovereign grace for what he hath already done. I hope he has many more souls yet to call in Hadlyme. And now my dear children, let me entreat you to walk circumspectly, be alive in religion, keep near the mercy seat, watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The times are sifting. God is about to purge his church. Hap-

py is the man, that endureth the fiery trial and who will come forth as gold!

"O, my son, be alive in your work. It is a great and glorious cause, but you must live near to God, you must be sincerely and importunately prayerful, you must not only teach your people publicly, but from house to house and not by word only but by a humble and pious example."

Under another date to the same he writes:

"I hope and pray that you, my dear children, will each of you live near to God. It is your lot to live in perilous times, but still if you are the sincere followers of Christ, you have a goodly heritage. It will matter but little whether we pass through this evil world in a peaceful calm, or in a terrible tempest, if we at last reach the blessed haven of eternal rest. Indeed, though the billows rage and are tempestuous, we may still have peace within, if we enjoy that blessed hope, which is an anchor to the soul sure and stedfast. The only way to enjoy this hope is to commit the keeping of our souls, daily, to Christ, as unto a faithful Creator. The flight of time is most rapid. We are all flying, as swift as the darting of the sunbeam, towards a boundless eternity. I have long conceived that there is but a step between me and death." [He lived twenty three years after writing this.]

"O, how solemn, how interesting, beyond expression, is the change! I wish to make it my chief concern to be prepared to come to the grave in peace, and I hope this will be the great concern of each of you. It is probable I shall be called before you, but you are pressing after, and there will be no perceptible difference between the length of my eternity and yours."

Under another date, eighteen years previous to his death, he writes in a letter to this son, at Brimfield, Mass.

"I am sensible my time is short. My continued and increasing infirmities, denote that 'the house of my tabernacle will soon be dissolved.' It will be nothing strange, if I should not live through the winter. But my times are in God's hands. I have long found nothing worth living for but to serve and glorify God, and to promote the best good of my fellow men. Oh, how greatly do I desire to see religion again revived among the people of my charge, before I go hence to be here no more."

No man, perhaps, lived in nearer view of death, than Mr. Vaill. It was the frequent subject of his conversation. On visiting his children in Massachusetts, which he generally did once in each year, it seemed always to rest upon his mind at each visit, for the course of

fifteen or twenty years, that it might be the last. This he uniformly mentioned on taking his leave, and always delivered an exhortation appropriate to the last visit. Thus his children who had gone out from the paternal dwelling, were favored annually with receiving his *dying counsel.* He could not have been more solemn and earnest, (says one of them) had he actually known it was the last time. He always proposed, on separating, to unite with them in prayer, with special reference to the occasion, even although it were but a short time following the usual devotions of the family. In these prayers he was expected to lead. He was always happy, and often exceedingly impressive and solemn on these occasions. Never did his children take leave of him without feeling that they were blessed with an eminently godly father, who greatly cared for and loved their souls.

In one of his last letters to his son in B. written about a year before his death, then in his 87th year, he says,

"I hope and pray that your return to B. will be followed with most happy consequences to you and your family, and the people of your former charge." [His son had been called from Brimfield, to the Pastoral charge of a Church in Portland, in the state of Maine, and

now was invited back by the people of his former charge to B.] "I trust, however, you will seriously bear in mind, that the remainder of your life will be short, should you arrive to the ordinary age of man. You will therefore view it of vast importance to strive to be eminently useful to the people of B., the little time God shall continue you. It is not probable that I shall survive another winter, but I desire to leave the event with God. I trust my children will daily remember their aged father in their prayers, who, from their first existence, has daily attempted to bear them on his heart at the throne of grace."

What a blessing to have such a parent! In how many thousands of prayers have the children of this man of God been remembered! And in what riches of divine grace, is it to be hoped they have shared, and will continue to share, in answer to his fervent supplications long after he slumbers in the grave!

CHAPTER XI.

His missionary spirit. His missions. Observance of the monthly concert of prayer. Attachment to the cause of missions. Gives up his eldest son to be a missionary. Dismission of this son from the people of his charge. Parting address to his son and his family.

THROUGH the whole period of his ministry, Mr. Vaill seemed to feel his obligations to labor for the spiritual good of his fellow men, whenever opportunity was afforded him. Though the people of his own charge constituted the ordinary field of his labors, yet the world was the field, which was embraced in his prayers and in the benevolent affections of his heart. He felt compassion in view of the perishing condition of his fellow men, as he looked upon the dark portions of the earth, and contemplated the state of millions without the knowledge of Christ, and the way of salvation by him. He held himself ready to preach to the destitute, so far as he could do it, and not neglect his own

people, and when on journeys to visit his friends, he evinced the spirit of a missionary in his readiness to converse with persons of his acquaintance and with strangers on the things of their salvation, and also in his readiness to preach, wherever he spent a night, provided a public meeting were to be holden. He was known and received as a minister of Christ, wherever he went, and on whatever occasion he was called to go abroad from his people.

The ministerial brethren, with whom he was associated, early discovered his missionary spirit long before any organized attempts were made to send the Gospel to the destitute new settlements of our own country, by the Churches of New England. As early as 1792, a missionary spirit began to show itself in Middlesex Association, to which Mr. Vaill belonged, in some special efforts in behalf of the new settlements in the State of Vermont. A temporary mission was projected to Vermont by the ministers of Middlesex Association, to be sustained by themselves, and Mr. Vaill was selected to go on this mission. He consented, and went into Vermont, and spent six weeks, laboring in destitute places in that State. His pulpit was supplied by the brethren of the Association in his absence. The success of this mission encourged the ministerial brethren of Middlesex Association, and

awakened a spirit of inquiry in other Associations, on the subject of missions to our settlements. In June, 1799, the General Association of Connecticut, at their meeting in Hebron, organized the *Missionary Society of Connecticut*, and appointed a board of Trustees to manage its operations and conduct its missions. This was soon followed by the formation of other Societies, of like character, in different States. In the language of Mr. Vaill: "Through the blessing of God, incalculable good has been effected by their salutary influence, a great check was given to the progress of vice and error, and the way prepared, in the then infant settlements, for the conversion of souls, the formation of churches, the better observance of the Sabbath, and the settlement of ministers. The labors of missionaries were followed with a number of powerful revivals of religion."

In the year 1807, the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, appointed and commissioned Mr. Vaill, to perform a mission into the State of New York, to what was then called the Black River country. He was on this mission, absent from his people, fifteen Sabbaths. In the report, which he presented to the Trustees of his labors, they were furnished with gratifying evidence that he was well received, and that the mission had been attended

with good. Mr. Vaill also threw out several suggestions in his report, useful to the Trustees in directing their operations in regard to subsequent missions.

After the monthly concert for prayer was introduced, it was early observed by Mr. Vaill, and perseveringly maintained by him in his church. It was an object with him to render this concert as interesting and beneficial as possible to his people. In this meeting he imparted missionary intelligence, brought up to view the state and claims of the heathen, urged the obligations of Christians to send them the Gospel, to pay for them, and to contribute, from time to time, for the support of Christian Missions: and, by his own example, and that of his family, encouraged them in freely bestowing their charities for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ. He mourned in view of the backwardness of churches, and of individual members, to give freely of their substance for this object.

In his journal, under date of June 23d, 1823, when opportunity had been given his people, and the churches around, to hear the claims of the heathen set before them, and some members seemed unwilling to do any thing to aid in sending them the Gospel, and when only small contributions were taken, Mr. Vaill made the

following entry; "*Covetousness is one of the most alarming sins of the present age, and it is fearfully predominant over the minds of many, who call themselves the friends and disciples of Christ. It is a melancholy thought, that many in the Church of Christ seem to be prejudiced against contributions for the Missionary cause.*"

Mr. Vaill regarded himself, and all that were entrusted to his care, as the Lord's, and in the government and education of his children, he sought to fit them for usefulness in the cause of Christ, and expected them to be employed, just as God in his providence should direct. The reader has already seen that his two sons had been called to take the pastoral oversight of churches. As the missionary cause advanced in this country, and a missionary spirit extended in the churches, and among the pastors, the mind of Mr. Vaill's eldest son, Rev. William F. Vaill, pastor of the church in North Guilford, became deeply interested in the condition of the heathen. He was led solemnly to inquire, whether it were not his duty to relinquish his pastoral charge and go to the heathen. The Sandwich Islands opened before his mind, at first, as the most inviting field for usefulness, and his attention was turned towards them for a season. But, about that period, a mission was projected to the American Indians, west of the

Mississippi, and the Osage nation was selected, as affording the most favorable prospect for a successful mission. A call for missionaries from the United Foreign Mission Society, the seat of whose operations was in the city of New York, was sent to New England. The object was to collect a missionary family to go to the far distant Osages, and attempt to civilize and Christianize them. While the Rev. William F. Vaill's mind was canvassing the subject of his duty to become a missionary, this call came to him, this new field opened to his view, and he was at length decided, with his companion, that it was a call from God, and they united in complying with it. They had a young and rising family; the perils of a long journey, and of a distant wilderness, as the home of their future residence, in the midst of rude savages, were before them. An affectionate people they were to leave behind them, who were sorry to part with them; and they were to be separated from their aged parents, and numerous relatives and friends. The undertaking seemed to many of their friends to be visionary and rash, and some endeavored to dissuade them from it; but not so the subject of this memoir. This aged Father loved his children and his grandchildren; but he loved the cause of Christ more, and was ready to give up his children to labor

in this cause, where they were most needed. He chose that this son and his companion should be governed by their own views of duty, and he cheerfully consented that he and his family should embark in the proposed mission.

The following extract is from the minutes of the Consociation, convened at North Guilford, on the 12th of April, 1820, to dissolve the pastoral relation of Rev. William F. Vaill to his church and people, that he might enter on this mission. This will show the feelings of his brethren towards him and the mission.

"The Consociation, taking into consideration the solemn duty imposed by Christ upon his ministers and the Church, by his binding command, *Preach the Gospel to every creature;* their immense obligations to the heathen, who in divine Providence are destitute of the means of grace; and the particular obligations of the American Church to the aboriginees of this country;' and regarding the dispensations of Providence in opening a way for our beloved brother, William F. Vaill, to carry the Gospel to the savages of our wilderness; and especially the influences of the Spirit of God on the minds of him and his partner to engage in this work, and his peculiar qualifications, in our view, for the missionary service, as clear indications of the will of Christ; though the Consociation feel

a tender regard for the interests of this church and are well convinced of the usefulness of Mr. Vaill's ministry among them, yet, from the foregoing considerations, they esteem it their duty to dissolve the pastoral relation between them. From the noble sacrifice which the church and people of this parish, have made in agreeing to part with their beloved minister, and from their present peace, the Consociation are cheered with the confidence, that the great Head of the Church will not be unmindful of their prosperity, and, that while he removes their present past or to a more extensive field of usefulness, that he will supply his place with one who will break unto them *the bread of life*, and lead them and their children to *the fountain of living waters*. Therefore, voted unanimously, that the ministerial connection between the Rev. William F. Vaill, and the Church and people in North Guilford, be dissolved; and the connection is hereby dissolved.

"This Consociation, also, as the result of a long and intimate acquaintance with Rev. William F. Vaill, do unanimously express their approbation of his character and conduct as a minister of Christ, and of his faithfulness and zeal in the cause of his divine Master; and they cheerfully recommend him, as a tried and approved servant of Jesus, to the Christian kind-

ness and fellowship of the churches, and of all who wish for the spread of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. DAVID SMITH, Scribe."

Mr. Vaill, with his family, in expectation of soon leaving his people and friends for the Western wilderness, paid a visit to Hadlyme, his native place in the month of April, 1820. It was an occasion of solemn interest to him and his friends. His honored father entered with him, in feeling, upon his mission, and commended him and his family to the merciful protection of the Great Head of the Church and on the Sabbath, it being the last time, that he expected his son and his family would worship with the church and people in that place, he delivered a public address on the occasion before the congregation in Hadlyme, the substance of which is here inserted, being extracted from the Missionary Register.

"It having pleased God, in his Providence, to prepare the way for my son to engage as a missionary to the heathen, in a far distant region, where he will probably spend the residue of his years; I think it my duty to express my feelings upon the subject, and to make my parting address to him and his companion, at this time, in the audience of the people of my charge, and of those who have been their associates in

early life." [They were both born and educated in Hadlyme.]

"The operations of God's hand, at this present period of time, are truly marvellous in our eyes. We enjoy the peculiar pleasure of beholding the dawning of the latter day glory. Its morning star has, sometime since, appeared in the East; and we have lately seen its benign rays beaming upon our Western hemisphere. Great exertions are now making, throughout the Christian world, to diffuse the light of the Gospel among the benighted pagans, who *have long been in darkness and the shadow of death.*"

"Although I have myself, for seven years, felt deeply interested in the missionary cause, yet it is but a few weeks since, that I ever expected a son to be designated as a messenger of salvation to the Heathen, in the remote parts of this continent; or, that he and his family should be called to bid a final adieu to the people of his charge, and, to all their near connexions, and, in all probability, not to meet again, *until the heavens are no more.*

"But how strong soever may be the ties of parental affection, so far as I am capable of judging, it appears to be his duty to accept of the appointment of the venerable board, who superintend this weighty business. I therefore cheerfully relinquish all attempts, and all right,

to prevent him from entering upon the arduous enterprise, to which I trust the Lord is calling him."

"It is a sentiment in which I have long been established, and which I have frequently inculcated in my public and private teaching, that the requisition of the Saviour, that people must forsake all they have for him, as a term of discipleship, is to be understood in its most literal sense, when his cause demands it. Of course, the same requirement confers the highest obligation upon all who would be his followers, to make a willing sacrifice of their ease, their worldly interest, and their pleasing accommodations, so far as the honor and prosperity of his kingdom are concerned. And he reasonably expects, that all who love him in sincerity, and who ardently desire the salvation of their fellow men, will like *Moses, choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin*, or of this world *for a season*. From the above mentioned considerations, I do now cordially acquiesce in this new and trying dispensation of divine Providence, and am willing that you, my son, should go forth as a missionary of the cross, into those regions of darkness, and of the shadow of death, where numerous, benighted souls reside, who have never heard that there is a Saviour, or *any Holy*

Ghost, or a way devised by infinite wisdom to restore lost sinners to the divine favor, or raise them to the high dignity of the sons of God here, and to prepare them for endless blessedness hereafter.

"As the circumstances, which attend the mission, require a speedy departure from your near friends, *confer not with flesh and blood,* nor desire the privilege of tarrying; till you may *first* BURY your aged parents. But go thou and preach the kingdom of God to the perishing heathen, as soon as the way shall be prepared for them to hear the glad tidings of salvation.

"Although the term for your preparation for this interesting work is short, I hope that you and your companion have, in some good measure, counted the cost; and that each of you have anticipated the painful sensations, which will naturally be excited in your breasts, on taking your final leave of your parents, your brethren and sisters, and the agreeable circle of your endeared acquaintance. I trust you have also brought into view the hardships and perils, to which you and your little ones will be exposed, on your long and hazardous journey.

"Though many unforseen difficulties and privations may attend the commencement of your establishment amongst an untutored and savage people, in a lonely desert, and who

speak a language which you understand not; *yet let none of these things move you.* And, for your encouragement and support, keep in view the hardships, the privations, the perils and trbulations, which the great Apostle of the Gentiles endured, that he might bring the pagan nations to the knowledge of salvation.

"Would you my dear children, prove successful in your warfare, 'you must take to yourselves the whole armor of God.' You must go *in the strength of the Lord of hosts, and in the name of your God set up your banner*, and erect the standard of the cross where Satan's seat has so long been established.

"Be sober, be vigilant. Daily draw near the throne of grace, by fervent prayer. Carry your children every day to the Saviour for his blessing. Labor faithfully to train them up for God. Strive constantly, by your counsels, your pious examples and prayers, to promote brotherly love, peace and harmony among your mission family.

"With fidelity to your Lord and Master, discharge your duty to the ignorant natives. Spare no pains to instruct them in the way to heaven. Should your success, for a long time, remain dubious, be not disheartened. *Be not weary in well-doing, for, in due season, you shall reap if you faint not.*

"No matter, my dear children, whether you are laid in the sepulchre with your fathers, or, whether your dust be deposited twenty eight hundred miles from the land of your nativity. If you die in the Lord, it will be as glorious to meet your descending Redeemer, when the voice of the arch-angel, and the trump of God shall awake you from the sleep of death, in the Arkansas country, as to arise surrounded by your former Christian connections.

"I now commend each of you, and your dear children, to God, and to the power of his grace, praying that he may protect and prosper you, and all that shall accompany you on this benevolent design. May the Great Head of the Church, hold you in the arms of his love, and comfort your hearts with the consolations of his Holy Spirit, under all your trials. May he improve you as the honored instruments of gathering in a large harvest of souls to Christ, and, through the riches of his grace, of preparing them to join in the *new song of redeeming love*, which is sung *by the hundred and forty, and four thousand, who have been redeemed from the earth.* And should we never again see each other's faces on this side of the grave, may we have a happy meeting at Christ's right hand, in the day when he shall make up his jewels. Amen. Farewell."

CHAPTER XII.

His spirit as a revival preacher. His want of apparent success no proof of his unfaithfulness. If tried by the rule of some modern preachers, he would be found deficient in piety. Erroneous extremes in regard to revivals. Revivals under his ministry. His interest in them. Good fruits. Thankfulness for them. Readiness to promote them.

"Is he a revival preacher," is an inquiry which is often made at the present day, when the character of a minister is sought to be known. That Mr. Vaill was deeply imbued with a revival spirit no one can doubt, who has read the preceding extracts from his journal, or who was acquainted with him personally in his ministry. He loved revivals, and carried, in his own experience, evidence of their reality and of the spirit that pervades them. He prayed for them from early life, he preached with a view to promote them, he employed conversation, religious conference and parochial labors in various forms, to secure the increase of

pure religion among his people. He was also interested in revivals abroad in other churches, and was ready to go and labor with his brethren in places where God was pouring out his Spirit. Still, if Mr. Vaill were to be estimated, as some are ready to estimate ministers, in view of their want of apparent success, he would be set aside as no revival preacher. It is not unfrequently the case, at the present day, that the immediate effects of preaching, in the awakening of sinners and in their hopeful conversion, are made the criterion of a minister's spirit and qualifications. It seems to be taken for granted that the labors of ministers are all to be directed to the promotion of revivals of religion; as if this class of visible results were all that are to be sought in the preaching of the gospel. But is not this a limited and partial view of the labors of the Christian ministry? Are not other things to be sought by the labors of ministers, in addition to revivals? Are there not remote effects, as well as immediate effects of public preaching? Is not every Evangelical preacher sowing the seed of the word of God in the spiritual field? Who can say how soon it shall spring up, or that he who soweth shall live to reap the harvest? What minister can say, who is witnessing a revival of religion among his people, that he is

not reaping the fruit of other men's labors? Or what minister, in time of a revival, can point to the visible effects, and say, these are evidences that I am a faithful and approved servant of Christ? Does God require ministers to estimate their fidelity by visible results, or by their cheerful obedience to his will? The results are known only in part; and, so far as known, are seen only in their outward appearance, and therefore are very uncertain, as evidences of success or of ministerial fidelity.

There are two extremes to be avoided, in our estimate of revivals of religion, and in our labors to promote them. The one extreme goes to rob God of the glory of his sovereignty and of his power, in relation to them, by conferring undue honor upon man in producing them. The other extreme goes to quiet man in spiritual sloth and inactivity, through perverted views of his obligations of duty to God, as a moral and accountable creature. Man's dependence affords no release from obligation, and no real excuse for sloth. He is bound to perform the whole revealed will of God, and, so far as a revival of religion is dependent on means, he is bound to employ the known means diligently and faithfully, as directed of God, leaving to his wise disposal the results.

When it is assumed that a pastor may have

a revival of religion at any time when he chooses, or that his faithfulness is to be estimated by his success in producing revivals, unwarrantable ground is taken; and from such premises wrong conclusions will be very liable to be drawn. It is apprehended that injury has resulted to the cause of revivals from this source. Is it not a fact, that some preachers who stand before the public as revival preachers, have been too unguarded and unqualified in their language, in respect to revivals of religion, and their power to produce them? Have not young men fallen into mistake on this point, in many instances? Some young preachers have gone so far as to limit the time which they would consent to tarry with a people, unless they could produce a revival! The space with some is, perhaps, two years, with others, perhaps, not so long; with others, it may be longer. They seem to act on the principle that a revival preacher may have a revival whenever he chooses, and hence, they manifest unwillingness to tarry with a people, unless they can see a revival. The revival is also regarded as evidence that they are true ministers of Christ. This leads to frequent dismissions and changes in the pastoral office. For if ministers are to be estimated by this rule, they must be set down as wanting in

piety or ministerial gifts, provided they are not blest speedily with revivals; and few will consent to remain and labor with a people under this imputation. Had Mr. Vaill or any of his cotemporaries acted on this principle, they would not have continued with their people through a term of years, laboring and praying for revivals, yet not witnessing them. The principle mistakes the character of true revivals, as being the work of the Spirit of God, or else it mistakes the character of human agency in producing them; and, it is possible, it has had an influence in corrupting some modern revivals, in which, perhaps, some of the doctrinal purity and enlightened and lasting piety of former revivals is wanting. A pastor who feels that he has power to command the rain of the Spirit upon his people, cannot have had long experience in the ministry. God gives his Spirit when he pleases to revive his work. His holy sovereignty is displayed in revivals of religion, as really as in other parts of his dispensations. And it is not for pastors to *know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.* It is presumption in a pastor to claim that he has power to produce a revival of religion. Said Paul, *I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing,*

neither he that watereth: but God, that giveth the increase.

The early part of Mr. Vaill's ministry was very far from being distinguished for visible success. He labored under great discouragements for more than twenty years. At times, he was ready to give up in despondence, and to conclude that he was not called of God to the work of the holy ministry. Still, he was not permitted to break away from his people, but was encouraged to hope in the power and grace of God to bestow the blessing in his own time. It would be great injustice to the memory of Mr. Vaill, to call in question his fidelity, during the first twenty years of his ministry, because of his want of apparent success. He was, during all that period, laboring and praying and hoping for the revival of pure religion among his people. He observed days of private fasting for this end; he called upon his church to observe days of fasting and prayer, in view of their low state; and, very often in his journal, does he refer to his want of success, and express his ardent longing for the revival of religion. The following is extracted as a sample of his spirit and feelings. "The state of the people in this place, as to religion, is still discouraging. I have hoped, and still hope, that God will visit us with the influences of his

Holy Spirit, and revive his work gloriously among us; but there are no present signs of such a time."

In 1806, there was a solitary case of hopeful conversion in his parish; and the following entry was made in his journal. "June 20th. A late instance of the hopeful conversion of a promising young woman in this place, has put new courage and animation into my mind. O! God, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, wilt thou not pour it out upon us, in his awakening and converting influences!"

"June 30th, 1806. I hope still in the power and grace of God to revive his work among us. This is, I think, all my encouragement, that God is able to awaken and convert such as are dead in trespasses and sins. I am often tried, when I reflect that I have spent so much of my life among this people with so little apparent success; but my lot has been cast in this part of the vineyard, nor dare I quit my post, until a wider door be opened, and the call of Providence appear as clear for my dismission as it was for my settlement."

There is much that is instructive to ministers at this day in the dealings of God with Mr. Vaill. God taught him his dependence, and his own insufficiency to produce a revival. He was not allowed to regard a revival as

man's work, nor to call that a revival of religion which was brought about by man's device. His hope, amid all his labors and discouragements, was in the power and grace of God; and God did not suffer him to go down to the grave, without seeing glorious manifestations, both of his power and grace, among the people of his charge.

In his half century sermon, preached Feb. 9th, 1830, he says: "I cannot learn that, previous to my settlement, there had ever been a revival of religion in this society, since its formation, which was then nearly forty years. Nor had the church in this place been accustomed to attend religious conferences. I introduced them the summer after I was settled, and a considerable number attended; but our meetings were dull and formal. The winter succeeding I set up catechetical lectures in the evening, designed principally for young people. A goodly number attended, but these meetings met with considerable opposition. I have continued evening meetings and lectures, more or less, in the proper season of the year, for nearly the whole term of my ministry. No special revival took place among us for more than twenty years. Between 1780 and 1800, there were a few cases of hopeful conversion, and a small number were added to the church."

"In the autumn of 1807, there were two cases of hopeful conversion, and in the spring and summer next succeeding, a greater revival took place than we had ever before witnessed. In the course of about a year and a half, sixteen persons were added to the church, as the fruit of this revival."

"In the summer of 1813, a more powerful and general work of the Spirit took place. Forty or more were entered on the list of hopeful converts, though short of thirty came forward and made a public profession of religion. The work continued for about two years, when some unhappy things took place, which gave it a speedy check. A general coldness and stupidity ensued and continued nearly up to 1827, when another general revival took place, and lasted, without much abatement, for about eleven months; as the fruit of which, fifty-six persons were admitted to the church."

Mr. Vaill lived to witness still further displays of the power and grace of God among his people. The spring of 1830 was marked with some special interest in the things of their salvation, and several became hopeful converts. The same was the case in 1834, and from fifteen to twenty were added to the church in that year. The fruits of these revivals under his ministry proved good. His church was

greatly enlarged and improved in its character. The intelligence, influence and weight of character in the congregation, were to a great extent embodied in the church, and the latter part of Mr. Vaill's ministry was not wanting in outward evidence that the blessing of God attended his labors. He seemed to grow in favor with his church and people as he grew in years; and even to old age, when enfeebled by infirmities, and obliged to suspend his active labors, he still retained the affections and confidence of his people. His long experience in revivals qualified him to be a safe counsellor for young ministers, and his instructions to such as were inquiring what they must do to be saved, could not be followed without bringing them to Christ. He was not for encouraging sinners to hope they were subjects of regeneration without evidence, nor on slight grounds of evidence. Nor was he for speedily counting up and forming a list of the hopeful converts; knowing that, in seasons of excitement, the religious impressions of many prove only temporary. The following extract is from his journal. "I find it is far from being for the honor of religion, where a revival takes place, to speak particularly of the number who get a hope of their conversion; since a considerable proportion of the latter often fall away and

lose all their apparent zeal and goodness." No pastor ever felt the preciousness of a revival more than Mr. Vaill, and few, if any, have given greater evidence of thankfulness under experience of the blessing. In a season of revival, he thus writes. "Blessed be God, the good work has commenced; though its progress is like a still small voice, it is continued. I am not fond of a great parade in religion. What abundant cause have I to bless God that I have lived to see another precious revival among the people of my charge! I hope and pray that it may be long continued, and that all, who have remained in an unconverted state, may now be brought in."

"I perceive that my continued laborious services, in attending meetings so frequently, will soon wear away my feeble remains of strength and life; but it is now harvest season with us. Has not a minister a call to exert himself in an unusual manner, when he appears to be promoting the spiritual good of immortal souls? It does not consist so much in the length of time, as in a diligent and faithful attention to the duties of our calling, to render us useful. The ministry and labors of the Saviour were short. The ministry of John the Baptist was of short continuance. Paul and the other apostles passed through those labors, hardships and sufferings, which were calculated to wear

out their strength and lives in a short time, and yet what eminent services did all these perform for God, and for the salvation of perishing sinners!"

"Satan cares not by what means he works, if he can only stir up difficulties which tend to hinder the progress of religion. Christians must always look out for severe trials after a revival of religion. If the adversary cannot succeed to prevent its progress, in the season of it, he will use all his arts to destroy its good effects afterwards. I desire to commit the people of my charge and the church to the care of the great Head of the Church, who is able to purify it from all errors in doctrine and practice."

After a season of revival. "The goodness of God towards me and my family and people, has been wonderful of late. O, that I had a heart to love, to fear, to know and serve God in newness of life!"

At another date, in prospect of a revival. "I have reason to bless God, with the warmest sentiments of gratitude, that there are any favorable symptoms of the revival of God's work among the people of my charge."

Good effects of a revival. "Since the late revival, there is a great alteration in this place, among the people, for the better; yet we are far from being what we ought to be as a people."

"When I think of the unconverted, my heart is pained within me. As I look round and see rational and immortal creatures laboring and toiling for perishing dust as their best portion, while the one thing needful is neglected, O! how do I pity them. How miserable is the condition of all unconverted sinners, who are living without God and without Christ in the world! And many are not contented to go to destruction themselves, but are laboring to take multitudes with them to the fearful place of torment, prepared for the workers of iniquity. But, blessed be God, there is a glorious day approaching, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; when Satan shall be bound a thousand years, that he may not go out to deceive the nations; and when wars and bloodshed shall be known no more."

For the millennium, Mr. Vaill prayed and hoped; and he rejoiced in view of it, and in all the increase of pure religion in the world. As he regarded revivals as the means of the enlargement of the church, and of the increase of pure religion in the church, his heart was deeply interested in them, up to the close of life. And, so far as he had opportunity, and had strength to labor in time of old age, he improved the privilege.

CHAPTER XIII.

Interest in objects of benevolence. Life member of two benevolent Societies. Efforts in the temperance cause. Results among his own people. Extracts from a Temperance Address. Extracts from a private letter to an acquaintance.

Every thing connected with the welfare of Zion, was regarded favorably by Mr. Vaill. He was friendly to the religious enterprizes of the age, so far as they are conducted on Evangelical principles, and he cordially co-operated with Evangelical Christians, in sustaining them. He was constituted a life member of the American Bible Society, and also of the American Tract Society by the Ladies of Hadlyme; who in this manner testified their affection for their pastor and their attachment to these Benevolent Institutions.

From early life, he was a decided and firm friend to temperance, and long before the modern temperance reformation was entered upon, he practiced upon the principle of abstinence.

He was frank and open in opposing intemperance, and labored more than most of his ministerial brethren, to arouse public attention to its alarming increase, and to stay its progress. In his poetical address to youth, in the form of a caution against vice, published in 1796, the vice of intemperance is particularly exhibited in its odious features.

For many years, his efforts in the temperance cause failed of receiving that co-operation which the importance of the subject demanded; and with a large portion of the people they were rather unpopular. But in the latter part of his ministry, as the temperance reformation progressed, he had the satisfaction to see his people coming into it very generally, and, by precept and example, he led them on like an aged veteran in the cause. Every member of his Church, male and female, became an enrolled member of the temperance society, and the great majority of the people of Hadlyme went over to the side of the temperance reformation. The church and parish of Hadlyme, stand forth to view, in this reformation, a noble example in advance of surrounding churches and parishes. It must have cheered the heart of their aged pastor to witness this blessed result among the people of his charge, just as he was quitting the stage of action.

In his advanced age, his labors in the temperance cause were well received, and were particularly serviceable to the aged, many of whom had felt that on account of the infirmities of age, they could not abandon the use of ardent spirit; yet they were encouraged in doing this by his example and advice.

He was invited abroad to deliver addresses in neighboring congregations; and so far as his strength would permit, he engaged in labors of this sort. The following extracts are from one of his addresses, delivered in 1830, to the people of Chester.

"My Christian friends: You will doubtless feel, that so numerous have been the addresses and publications on this topic, by men of superior talents and attainments, that in offering additional ones, we are like to persons gleaning among the sheaves after harvest men. But notwithstanding this, and though the speaker is borne down in a great measure with age, and infirmity, he will attempt to offer something, as the testimony of a dying man, in favor of this all important cause.

"I am confident that there can be no need of additional motives to convince the friends of virtue and religion, of the importance of pledging themselves to observe entire abstinence from the use of ardent spirit, except as a med-

cine, provided they have given credit to the testimony of a cloud of witnesses in regard to the following facts, viz.

"That all distilled liquors contain not the least nutricious quality, and add nothing to the physical strength of the human body, but only serve to produce an animating, momentary excitement, which is uniformly followed with debility and languor.

"It is ascertained that these liquors contain a degree of poison, which operates, in a slow and secret manner, to effect the brain, and gradually to impair the whole of man's physical constitution. As this representation is doubtless correct, it of course follows, that persons who consent to destroy themselves, by the free and excessive use of these liquors, are to be regarded as self-murderers.

"Another fact, stated by judicious observers is, that 25 or 30,000 of the citizens of the United States, die annually in consequence of their intemperance. This consideration alone should have influence to prevent all sorts of persons from continuing a practice so ruinous, and to enlist them at once, on the principle of entire abstinence.

"Another fact stated repeatedly by the advocates of temperance, is, that the habitual use of strong drink, though moderate for a while,

has resulted in the ruin of property, of reputation, and of the well-being of multitudes, who were once respectable, and, in many instances, wealthy persons, and brought poverty and misery upon them and their families; and, in ten thousand instances, intemperance has turned the once peaceful and happy dwelling into a doleful habitation, a *hold* of *foul spirits.* Nor can the following facts be controverted, that intemperance has filled the prisons with culprits and the alms houses with paupers, which have cost the respective states and towns enormous sums annually; that it has been the chief cause of murders, manslaughter, suicides and riots, that it has occasioned a tax upon the honest, industrious and laboring classes of society, for the maintenance of paupers, rendered such by intemperance.

"In view of the above named evils, and many others, which might be mentioned, is it not marvellous, that there should be any persons found in a land of gospel light, who should still plead for what is called even a moderate use of ardent spirit? And it is still more astonishing, that any of the professors of religion, who hope that they are travelling to the kingdom of heaven, should be opposed to the temperance reformation. I would ask whether such as are on the way to the New Jerusalem need the aid of

strong drink, to enable them more faithfully and successfully to engage in the self-denying duties which the Saviour requires? Can they, by daily drinking this poison, gain a more easy or complete victory over the allurements of the world, the temptations of the devil, and the remaining corruptions of their own depraved hearts? Can they pray more sincerely, and acceptably in their families and in their closets? Does the morning dram fit them to pour out their hearts more fervently to God for his blessing on themselves and their households? And when the sacred day of rest returns, I ask whether ardent spirit is a necessary ingredient in their preparation for the private or public exercises of that holy day? Does the effluvia that the drinkers of ardent spirit emit from their breath in the sanctuary, constitute that holy incense, which comes up acceptably before the mercy seat? Nay, is it not rather offering that strange fire before God, for which sin Nadab and Abihu were immediately burned to death? Do the lovers of strong drink say, they find a warrant in the word of God for its moderate use? I would inquire whether they can find this warrant, but by perverting and wresting the sacred scriptures from their obvious import, as do the advocates of error, to prove the doctrine of universal salvation, and other

erroneous doctrines? Is it not a black mark upon those who call themselves Christians, to attempt to draw something from the word of the living God, to warrant them in the indulgence of their depraved appetites, when they do it, as they have reason to believe, at the expense of the temporal and everlasting happiness of thousands of fellow beings, as well as at the peril of their own salvation? Such persons, whatever may be their profession of friendship for Christ, must be viewed in the same light with profane Esau, *who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

"But do they profess to make the scriptures of truth their guide; they will find it recorded under the pen of inspiration, that temperance is one of the graces of the Spirit, that he who striveth for the mastery, must be temperate in all things, that such as would be the followers of Christ must take up the cross daily, must walk circumspectly, must abstain from all appearance of evil, and by no means put a stumbling block in a brother's way."

* * * * *

"And now my hearers, we ought to bear in mind, that we have arrived at that solemn and critical period, when the conduct of the present

inhabitants, will probably decide the future destiny of those who shall succeed them. They will leave either a blessing or a curse behind them, not only for their children, but for unborn generations. Hence all, who are not past feeling, must be sensible that they are under indispensable obligations to exert themselves, with a firm and persevering zeal, in promoting the cause of temperance."

Mr. Vaill not only gave public addresses, he also gave private admonitions, by word and epistle, to individuals whom he saw in danger of falling into this vice. The following extracts are from one of his private letters, addressed to the head of a family, in whose welfare he felt interested.

"Dear Sir: — You will permit me to address you, upon a very interesting and important subject; and, I trust, I shall do it with all the kindness and faithfulness of one, who has a sincere regard for your temporal and everlasting well-being. From a number of years acquaintance with you, I have considered you as capable of making a useful man in your family and in society; and you are blest with a worthy, and, I hope, pious companion, and with a number of promising children. But O, my dear friend, my heart aches, while I view you on the high road to ruin, by that fatal evil, intemperance.

However insensible you may be to the imminent danger you are in, your friends and acquaintance have, for a considerable time, seen in you those dark symptoms, which ordinarily precede habitual intoxication. I have witnessed this myself. Seldom of late have I been near enough to shake hands and to converse with you without perceiving the scent of rum from your breath. Your countenance also betrays you, and your manner of speaking at times denotes the excitement of ardent spirit. Your acquaintance are beginning to rank you in the class of the intemperate.

"As I am on the borders of the grave and the eternal world, my conscience would not suffer me to rest, till I gave you some faithful warning on this subject. I am sensible, that when a person has long been accustomed to the use, it must be attended with some self-denial, entirely to abandon the practice, yet, by the grace of God assisting you, it may be done, yea it has already been done, by great numbers, who had long been in the habit of intemperance. And, surely, every rational person, who believes in the truths of the Bible, will acknowledge that it is infinitely better to pass through the most painful temporary mortification of his inordinate lusts and appetites, than to ruin himself for time and eternity. This corresponds

with the following words of the Saviour. *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

"And not only does intemperance, persisted in through life, destroy the soul and body forever, but, O, how shocking the consequences to the peace, the property, the good order and well being of families! An intemperate man lays the foundation to entail poverty, misery and disgrace upon his family. If his wife and children do not follow his example, they must unavoidably share in the distressing consequences! How many heart-rending sighs and groans, and tears does an intemperate husband occasion a pious wife, or his children if they prove virtuous and temperate, and under what deep and lasting disgrace does an intemperate head of a family descend to the grave!

"And now, my dear friend, if my apprehensions concerning you are not well founded, you will, I trust, impute my plain dealing to a sincerely benevolent intention, but if they are founded in truth, I hope and pray they may not fail of the salutary effects for which they are designed. It is a favorable time to commence the work of reformation, numbers are joining the temperance ranks, you can now cast in your

lot with them. Should you comply with this proposal and become a humble, penitent, praying follower of Christ, you would not only retrieve your character, and be prepared to spend the rest of your days in peace, but, by the grace of God, you would be admitted at last to dwell with them in Christ's kingdom who have been washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

From your aged friend,

J. VAILL."

CHAPTER XIV.

Settlement of a Colleague. Retires from active service. Unexpected removal to Killingworth. Farewell address to his people. Occasional labors and visits after his removal. Useful to the close of life.

In the latter part of the year 1831, finding the infirmities of age increasing upon him, Mr. Vaill entered into arrangements with his people for them to procure for him a colleague. To enable them to do this, he consented to relinquish his salary, when the arrangement should go into effect. Accordingly, in the spring of 1832, the Rev. Ralph S. Crampton was installed colleague pastor of the church in Hadlyme. He was dismissed in the autumn of 1834; and in the spring of 1835, Rev. George Carrington was installed colleague pastor with Mr. Vaill. Mr. Carrington remains in the pastoral charge of this church.

Though from the settlement of a colleague,

Mr. Vaill retired from the responsibility of supplying the pulpit on the Sabbath, still he did not lose his interest in the people. He was about among them, encouraging whatever was calculated for their good, strengthening the hands of his colleague, and exercising a fatherly affection for the people.

The winter of 1836 disclosed, in Divine Providence, an unexpected way for him to pass the few remaining years of his life in freedom from care and anxiety in regard to his support. The marriage of his youngest daughter determined him to break up his family establishment, and to remove to the family of his son-in-law, David Evarts, Esq., of North Killingworth, (now Killingworth). This daughter was the only child that had remained with him. On her had devolved the cares of the family, and the responsibility of nursing and ministering to the comfort of her aged parent. This change involved the trial of leaving the place which had been his home for more than half a century; where he had sojourned and prayed, and studied and labored, and reared up his family. At first, it seemed to him impossible, yet he became reconciled to the change, and saw and admired the faithfulness of God in opening the way for his removal to the family

of his son-in-law, where he received all the kind attentions which could be desired in time of old age.

His farewell address on this occasion to his people is here inserted. It was extemporaneous, and has been furnished through the kindness of his colleague, Rev. George Carrington, who took it down in short hand at the time it was delivered.

"On the afternoon of Lord's day, March 27th, 1836, the Rev. Joseph Vaill, being about to remove from Hadlyme, addressed the congregation in substance as follows:

"My Christian Friends,

"You are all sensible that the ways of God are mysterious; that the course of his providence is not to be fathomed. Many, very many surprising changes take place in the course of it.

"I little expected to leave this place till I should be carried to the grave. For I expect soon to take up my lodging in that narrow house, not to depart thence till the heavens be no more. My leaving you before that event is with reluctance, and only in compliance with the order of God's providence.

"You are all sensible that I have been many years your pastor, and have broken to you the bread of life. During that time, I have en-

deavored to dispense to you the truth, as it is in Jesus, according to the best of my ability.

"For many years after my settlement in this place, I labored under great discouragements. Few were converted to Christ. The war of the revolution, which was then raging, engrossed the public attention. The requisitions which were made on the people for military service, distracted their thoughts and prevented their attending to the concerns of their souls. But after that period, God was pleased to grant success to the labors of his unworthy servant. Several seasons of the outpouring of the Spirit were enjoyed. It is within the recollection of some of you, that for many years, meetings were kept up three times a week, and sometimes oftener. Many, God knows how many, were brought into the kingdom of Christ. Many of them have departed, and some of them, it is hoped, are now in glory.

"And now what shall I say? You are sensible that an old man like me can say but little. You that profess religion; have you done all that you could to promote it? Have you done all in your power to revive the work of God? Have you strengthened the hands of your new pastor? Have you prayed as much as you could? Have you taught and warned your children as much as you could? Have you

prayed for them and with them? Have you travailed in birth for them? Have you endeavored to restrain them from the ways of this wicked world? Have you strengthened the hands of your pastor as much as you ought? The work of the ministry is weighty. It is no trifling work. It is enough to overwhelm one who is not upheld by Christ's righteousness.

"Have you paid that regard to the Sabbath which you ought? Many professors of religion are wanting in regard to the Sabbath. They meet outside of the meeting house in pleasant weather, not, it is to be feared, for the purpose of serious conversation, but that they may join with the men of the world in their conversation. Or they lie late in bed on the morning of that day, because they have no worldly business to call them up. But the Sabbath is our stay; it is the support of religion. Take it away, and all is gone. Look at the valley of the Mississippi. There the Sabbath is neglected or overrun with pastime. And the Roman Catholics, seeing that this is a fit soil for them, are flocking in there and filling the country.

"Brethren, are you as faithful as you ought to be in attending public worship? Christians

ought not to be deficient in this. How can any maintain a Christian character without it? How can they, without setting a pious example? The apostle warns us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; and so much the more as we see the day approaching. What day? The day of judgment — the great day, when every man's work shall be tried, of what sort it is, and profession and practice shall be laid in the balance.

"You that profess religion; let me entreat you to wake up. It will not answer to treat the subject of religion in a trivial, slothful manner; we must wake up and be in earnest in it, as were the saints and patriarchs and martyrs of Christ.

"There are some of you who make no profession. Perhaps you have never in your lives prayed to God. If you have not, the time past is gone; you cannot recall the time which is past. Was there ever a time, when, like Nathaniel under the fig-tree, you sat and meditated on the things of Christ? Have you ever, during that part of your lives which is past, prayed in your families? If not, you cannot recall the time which you have lost. If you put off this duty a little longer, it will be true

of you, that you have never in your life done it; that during your whole life, you have never made a prayer.

"If you have never repented, when will the time come? Do you feel more friendly to religion now than you did years ago? Are any of you more willing to engage in the self-denying services of Christ than you were thirty years ago? Do you grow any more willing, by delaying to do them? Do you hope that God will have mercy on you, as he did on the thief? But let it be considered that his case is the only one which we read of in the Bible, brought to repentance and accepted at so late an hour. To rely upon this, and put off repentance, must be presumptuous and hazardous.

"Perhaps some of you are flattering yourselves that all will be well enough; that all will be saved. It may be that some few of you rely on the Universalist doctrine. But it is a fatal delusion. It comes from the adversary of souls. Why, if all will be saved, did not the apostles tell the Jews so, instead of preaching to them the terrors of the Lord? Why did not Peter tell those who were pricked in the heart, on the day of Pentecost, and inquired, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' — 'You need not trouble yourselves — all will be well — all will be saved — there is no need

of this distress about it.' Listen not to these lying spirits that go out to deceive the nations. For the apostle tells us that in the last days there shall be seducing spirits and doctrines of devils in the world. If, my brethren, any of you find out from the Bible, that man can be saved without sanctifying grace, you will be the first that have discovered it. You must be born again. This is what all faithful ministers tell you, and are continually telling you. Dont think that certain subtle men are wiser than all that have gone before them ; that they have found out a new meaning to the Bible by their philosophy and refinements."

"Young people often feel haughty and confident, because they think they have discovered that all are going to be saved. But, my young friends, do attend to the solemn words of an inspired writer: 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.' It is infinitely important to keep in mind the duty of remembering your Creator. Listen to the moans of the dying impenitent. Many accounts of these are published. How many, on a death bed, have said, O ! I am unprepared ; I want a moment longer to prepare for death !

"My brethren and friends, live in peace.

May the God of peace be with you. May we soon hear of the goings of God in Hadlyme. May we hear that professors are engaged; that they labor together with their pastor; that they regard the Sabbath, and are zealous of good works.

"Brethren, be not weary in well doing. It will do you no good to get much, and become rich in this world, if you are not rich towards God. If you set your hearts on riches, the time will come, when you will say, 'Here's all; I've no more.' Many who have had little of this world, and suffered much, have found that religion will support them under all trials, and fill them with consolation. Religion can support you under every trial. I have heard many moans of youth upon a dying bed, because they were going into eternity unprepared. I have seen many changes, but I have found nothing that will satisfy the soul, but to live a life of prayer. It has been my earnest prayer that I might know how to die. And I know that nothing will do you the least good, unless you have an interest in the Son of God.

"And now I bid you farewell till we meet at the tribunal of Christ. I desire your prayers for me, in my advanced age. I am loth to leave you. My attachments to the church and people are very strong. I have had many

friends who have been very kind to me; some of them from a distance of three hundred miles. They have ministered to my necessities. I am yet alive, but my time is coming. I hope, through amazing grace, to be admitted to the company of the redeemed. I hope that you, who survive me, will lend me your aid to bring my remains and lay them by the side of my departed wife. I hope she was a Christian. There I wish to lie till the resurrection, that we may rise together, and hand in hand ascend to the mansions of the blessed."

At Killingworth, Mr. Vaill found himself very contented in the family of his son-in-law; there he remained cheerful and happy up to the time of his death. Occasionally visiting his people at Hadlyme, and his ministerial brethren in neighboring churches, and preaching as his strength would permit, he continued to be useful. It was a time of revival in the church at Killingworth, when he removed there, and in reference to his labors in that place, the Rev. E. G. Swift, the pastor of that church, in a letter, thus writes:

"Mr. Vaill came here at the time we were enjoying a season of revival, and he entered into it with all his heart, preaching often on the Sabbath, and attending our weekly church prayer meetings and afternoon lectures. On

such occasions, and in private, his admonitions, especially to Christian professors, were exceedingly solemn and faithful, and often pointed and heart searching. The impression which he left upon the minds of us all, in his public services and in his daily walk, was that he was an eminently good and holy man."

In one of his last letters to his son in Brimfield, Mass., written less than a year before his death, he says, "I have preached since I have been in this place (Killingworth) upwards of forty times for Mr. Swift and neighboring ministers. The reason for my engaging in such frequent labor is the present prevalence of error and lukewarmness among ministers and professors. I know I am but a feeble instrument at best, but the work of God is promoted not by finite power and human eloquence, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts."

He became greatly endeared to the family of Mr. Evarts and to the people of Killingworth; and in view of his removal to that place, he seemed to be perfectly satisfied, and often spake of the faithfulness of God towards him. In the summer of 1838, apprehending that the time of his departure must be near, he made the visits which he wished to make to his people and ministerial brethren, and with one of his brethren, with whom for more than twenty

years he had lived in habits of uninterrupted Christian and ministerial intercourse, he left a request that he should preach his funeral sermon. In this manner were his labors closed, — his visits finished and his arrangements made for the time of his departure ; and in the retirement of the family of his son-in-law, mingling occasionally in religious meetings with the people of Killingworth, he remained, waiting for his Lord's coming. It was not his desire to outlive his usefulness. Nor is there reason to suppose that he did. His conversation, his counsels, his prayers, his Christian example, enabled him to do good up to the close of life. And neither the young nor the old, could see him and converse with him without feeling a kind of veneration for him, as an holy man of God, that was soon to leave the world.

CHAPTER XV.

His last sickness. Death. Funeral. Extracts from the sermon preached at his funeral. Notices of his life and character, as sketched by different persons. Closing remarks.

The last sickness of Mr. Vaill was of short continuance, and not marked with much visible suffering. In general, in his sickness, so far as he was able to converse, he manifested the same composure and Christian feeling as he had uniformly done at other times. The following account of his sickness and death, at the request of the compiler, has been furnished by the daughter who attended him, and was an eye-witness to the closing scene.

"I know not that we can furnish any additional particulars to what you have already, of the closing scene of my honored father's life. His mind was not clear during his last sickness, nor was he able during a part of the time to speak.

When first taken, he conversed freely about dying; said it was probably his last sickness, and wished me to inform Mr. Parsons, that he might be ready to preach at his funeral. He appeared composed, as he has uniformly done before, when speaking of his dissolution. After this he seemed rather to sink into an insensible state, and took but little notice of any thing, though he knew his friends who called to see him, and expressed his usual interest in them. His strength diminished daily, though he had no violent disease upon him. His nature seemed to be worn out; his sufferings were apparently light. In death, he had not one struggle, but sunk to rest in great serenity. He was taken up into an easy chair about nine o'clock in the evening. We found that he was failing fast; he was laid back upon the bed, when he commenced rattling in his throat. We then perceived that the closing scene was at hand, and gathered around his bed to witness his departure. It was deeply affecting to his daughter, who had so long ministered to this venerable parent in his advanced age, and received a pious education from his tender care. It recalled to mind the death of a beloved mother six years before, in which affliction father and myself were the only near relations present.

But why should I mourn for the loss of such parents? They have gone to receive their reward for Christian fidelity."

"The family where our venerable parent closed his earthly pilgrimage, was much affected at parting with him. He had a peculiar faculty to gain the affections of children. Our children all loved him, (children of Esqr. Evarts by a former marriage) and never will forget the instructions he gave them. He gained many friends in Killingworth, and I trust that the efforts he made near the close of life for the salvation of souls in this place, will be productive of good long after he has reposed in the grave."

"God was very merciful in giving our dear father so peaceful a release from the body, as he ever from a child had a dread of passing through the dark valley. Immediately after he had closed his eyes, his countenance, which had never looked distorted or terrifying, settled into the same composure as if he had been in a peaceful sleep." The manner of his death, corresponded with his life. He met the king of terrors with composure, and in reliance on his Redeemer. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* Thus died the Rev. Joseph Vaill, on the 21st of November, 1838, at Killingworth,

in the 88th year of his age, and 59th year of his ministry.

Intelligence of his death was immediately conveyed to Hadlyme, and to some extent in neighboring churches; and on the 23d inst., his funeral was attended in the meeting house at Hadlyme. The occasion was one of deep and solemn interest to the church and people of Hadlyme, to the pastors of neighboring churches and others that were present from their congregations. A sermon was preached by Rev. Isaac Parsons, of East Haddam. The subject was *the faithful minister going to his reward*, founded on Matt. xxv. 23: *His Lord said unto him, well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* A few extracts from the sermon are here inserted.

"In speaking of the faithful minister, I would not be understood to assume the prerogative of God in respect to knowledge of the hearts and motives of men. We judge of men from their apparent characters and outward lives. And when we find a minister of the gospel whom we regard as a faithful servant of the Lord, our opinion of him is formed in view of his outward life. Fidelity in every employment, and in every relation of life, is one of the

loveliest traits of character; and this in a minister of the gospel is one of the highest excellences. To be a faithful ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ in the holy ministry, is the highest honor to which mortal man can attain, and it will secure a high degree of glory in the state of reward."

"I will not detain you to portray in this place the character of a faithful minister; to show in what fidelity consists, and how it is manifested; nor will I go into an argument to prove that the aged and venerable minister of Hadlyme, whose voice is now silent in death, and whose face in the flesh we shall look upon this day for the last time, sustained this character."

"Through a long ministry, and under many changes and discouragements, in labors public and private, in the house of God, in the conference, at the church lecture, in the house of mourning, by the bedside of the sick and dying, on funeral occasions, in pastoral visits, in his own domestic circle, in his attention to schools, in Ecclesiastical councils, at ordinations and dismissions of pastors, in his intercourse with ministerial brethren, in his adherence to the great truths of the Christian system, in his love for revivals of religion, and interest in missions and the extension of the kingdom of Christ in the

world, he has acted the part of a faithful servant of the Lord, and he has left behind him testimony to his fidelity in the consciences of all to whom he ministered, or who shared his acquaintance. You all feel that he was an honest, devoted, godly man, and that he is gone to share the reward of a faithful servant. Such is my feeling after enjoying his friendship and living in ministerial intercourse, and uniform confidence with him for more than twenty years. I loved him as a father in the ministry, and I could always confide in him as a faithful friend, and a minister of an honest and upright heart."

"But we have come together to day to bury this servant of the Lord. Never before have we met him under equally solemn, and tender and joyful associations. The burial of a faithful pastor is, to his people, attended with very different feelings and hopes from his ordination. In 1780, almost fifty-nine years ago, the Rev. Joseph Vaill was ordained and set over this church and people, in the presence of your fathers and mothers, and by an Ecclesiastical council, composed of pastors and delegates that have died before him. At the time of his ordination, your fathers were looking forward into his commencing ministry in hope of good to themselves and their children; those of you

who had then attained to adult age, and others that were children of some years, can remember the occasion, and can recall to mind your associations and compare them with your associations to-day. The fathers and mothers that were then on the stage of life, have gone to their reward. They performed their service, and left their pastor and your pastor behind, he retaining your affections, and you sharing his love and a daily remembrance in his prayers. You come to day to consign to the grave this, your venerable pastor, and the thought is a welcome one to indulge, that he has gone to meet in the intermediate state of glory, the pious dead of his beloved flock, who had gone before him. Though the society and fellowship of the blessed in glory, can be only a subordinate source of enjoyment, still we may suppose, there will be something exquisitely delightful in the meeting of a minister and the people to whom he ministered.

"As we extend our thoughts back through the space of more than half a century, and contemplate the ravages of death in this place, in the intermediate time, and confine our view to the changes effected in families and neighborhoods, and in the structure of society, and then go through your graveyards, and think of the congregations gathered there, we are filled with

tender recollections. But now that servant of the Lord, who through all this long period, stood by the sick praying, and commended the dying to the Lord, and attended the funerals of the dead, is himself numbered with them: and, at his request, made to me in anticipation of this occasion, I stand here to day in this sacred desk, to sympathize with you and your surviving pastor in this solemnity, and to suggest motives for improvement.

"God had spared him to a good old age. His ministry among you was long and useful, its close has been peaceful and happy. The covenant faithfulness of God was often acknowledged by him, in the care exercised over him in time of old age. Few aged men whether private Christians, or ministers of the Gospel, are more familiar with meditations upon death. I well remember his conversation at our last interview, when speaking of his approaching change. 'I feel,' said he, that I am near to eternity. I think I have good hope through grace, but I am not without fear, through the deceitfulness of sin. I am a great sinner, but through the mercy of God in Christ, I hope to be saved. I think I love religion, and have been trying to serve God for a great many years, but Oh, how poorly!' It was remarkable to see in this aged minister, such abiding

views of the great evil of sin, and of his own unworthiness, and such a sense of dependence on Divine grace. There was nothing like boasting in himself or his own righteousness, and he seemed to rest all his hopes on the merits of Christ, for pardon, and acceptance unto eternal life.

"The close of such a ministry, in view of its reward, is attended with joyful associations. It is true, we cannot conceive of the glory and blessedness of being with Christ, in his state of glory; we cannot tell the amount of that holy joy, that is brought to view in the text, nor how the rewards of grace shall be proportioned among the faithful according to the measure of their fidelity; but we are assured that death is gain to the faithful servant, that he is raised to a higher station of dignity and glory, to a higher state of usefulness and blessedness, that he is removed from sin, from sorrow, from temptation, from the society of the wicked, from suffering, and that he will be no more subject to death. It is indeed cheering to contemplate the faithful servant, as thus leaving this world, and going to his reward under the approving sentence, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*

"God has manifested his faithfulness towards this church and people, in giving to them so faithful a pastor, and in continuing him to them

so long. It was a source of happiness to your aged pastor, that you were blest with a colleague pastor, in whom he confided, and who, he hoped, might long be spared to you after his decease. In this respect, God has dealt with you in mercy, and in view of the removal of your aged pastor, you are permitted to indulge the pleasing thought, that, as soon as he had finished his course of usefulness in this world, the Great Head of the Church has taken him to a higher state of usefulness and glory in the invisible world. You have occasion for gratitude for so faithful and devoted a pastor; and in his death is no occasion for sorrow, as if it were an afflictive event. Your loss is to be contemplated as his gain. The loss to his children and friends is also to be viewed as his gain. He is still serving God, and is doubtless filling a far higher sphere of holy influence in the divine kingdom, than when he was pastor of this church. And though dead, he yet lives among you, he lives in your recollections, he lives in the influence of his preaching while with you, he lives in the kindred Spirit and faith, and labors of his surviving colleague, he lives in the testimony of your consciences, to his fidelity, while with you. And in all these ways he is still laboring with you for your good.

and inviting you to follow him, so far as he followed Christ.

"To all of this church and congregation, the occasion is affectingly solemn. The relation of your aged pastor to you, is now dissolved. He has gone to give in his account, how he has preached, and how fulfilled the duties of the holy ministry among you. You will meet him no more in this sanctuary, but you will meet him again at the bar of Christ, when it will appear how you have improved his ministry. Those of you, who are Christians, in whose hearts the love of God has been shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, may hope to meet him with joy, and to stand among the children God has given him, to be his crown of rejoicing, saved through his instrumentality. But is this the case with all this flock? Are there not some, who are yet in their sins, for whom this servant of the Lord has prayed and labored, and whom he has often warned to flee from the wrath to come, and against whom remaining in sin, he will be constrained to be a witness at last? Oh, think impenitent ones of the account you must give of this holy man's ministry, which you have enjoyed, and which has been in vain, as it respects your repentance and salvation, and be excited to turn from your sins now, while *it is yet an accepted time!* Attend to the

admonition of this occasion, listen to the voice of this providence, and be quickened in duty to be found in Christ, and to be prepared to stand approved in the judgment."

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"To the children of God in this place, the thought that they shall see his face no more, who has so long been their spiritual father and guide, will produce tender emotions, when the grave shall close upon his sealed coffin, and fond affection will centre around his grave, because there his mortal body sleeps. But blessed be God, it is not an eternal sleep! It was his choice to have his grave here, because the saints to whom he ministered were here, some in their graves, and some still alive. It was his choice, and I rejoice that your affection has responded to his request, that his grave should be with you, to the end that in the morning of the resurrection, at the sound of the arch-angels trump, he might rise with his people, and come forth from the grave with them, changed after the similitude of the glorious body of Christ, to meet the Lord in the air, to enter with him into the final state of glory, to be forever with the Lord. Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.'"

The people of Hadlyme, testified their affectionate respect to the memory of their aged pastor, by their full attendance on his funeral, and tenderness of feeling, shown in paying their tribute of grateful affection at his grave.

In one of the public journals in which his death was mentioned, a summary sketch of his life and character was given, from which the following extract is taken. "The decease of this venerable servant of Christ, was announced in our last. But his character and example deserve a more particular notice. It is recorded of righteous Abel, 'he being dead yet speaketh.' The example of the departed servants of Christ, is their legacy to the Church, for the benefit of coming generations. Pious example then, like the mantle of Elijah, should be gathered up and preserved by those, who would be followers of them, who through faith and patience, have inherited the promises. Mr. Vaill was eminent for his piety, his faithfulness, his consistency, and his perseverance. He endured unto the end, he was faithful unto death, and we doubt not, has received a crown of life.

"The example of this respected and beloved servant of Christ, was in many respects instructive. He was constant and indefatgable in

ministerial labors. He never shrunk from the path of duty. He spared no pains to instruct and improve all that came in the sphere of his influence. In the station to which he was assigned in Providence, he continued in the faithful and successful discharge of ministerial duty, till increasing age and infirmities rendered it expedient for him to have assistance. He then relinquished his salary and a colleague was settled. He still continued to perform the duties of the ministry, in his own and neighboring parishes, until a short time previous to his death. Now he rests from his labors, his body sleeps in the grave amidst the silent congregation of his cotemporaries until the morning of the resurrection."

Extracts from letters containing notices of Mr. Vaill's character.

HADDAM April, 19th, 1839.

Rev. Mr. Parsons,

Dear Sir: — I am glad you are about to publish a biographical sketch of father Vaill. I knew him well, during my former ministry in this country, when he was in the prime and vigor of his days, used to exchange pulpits with him, to labor with him, as he did with me, and to meet him at Ministers meetings, Councils, and Associations. Impressions of him were not lost during my residence in Massachusetts,

[Dr. Field was absent from Middlesex County eighteen years,] and after my return to the county, our acquaintance was renewed and continued until his death.

He was a precious man. I have known few in whose entire life, (and he lived to a great age,) so few things existed, which can now be regarded as matters of regret, and, so many in which we can rejoice. He possessed native good sense, and considering the difficulties under which he labored in the early part of his days, his literary and theological attainments were very respectable. He studied the Bible much, and was well versed in the doctrines of grace. In preaching he was plain, and serious. In doctrine, he showed uncorruptness, gravity and sincerity, and how holily, and justly, and unblamably he behaved himself among them, that be here, the survivers in his church and congregation can testify. His visits among the inhabitants of his own parish, and with his brethren, among the inhabitants of other parishes, were eminently happy. He spake much of a change of heart, of repentance and faith and other graces, not only because these things are inculcated in the Scriptures, as indispensable to salvation, but because they accorded with his own experience. Wherever he conversed, wherever he tarried a night among acquaintan-

ces or strangers, he preached a sermon, gave an exhortation, or offered a prayer, the impression was left, that he was a man of God. He bore the marks of simplicity and godly sincerity. He loved religion, he loved revivals, he loved missions, he loved good men and labored and prayed for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom."

"Though his situation was rather retired, and his sphere of pastoral labor rather limited though his circumstances in life, in several respects, were different from those which worldly men would choose, yet he enjoyed manifold, more happiness in this present time, than falls to the lot of men of this description. He enjoyed much happiness in his family, in the society of a pious and prudent wife, in whom his heart safely trusted, and in children whom he trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in the society of saints, in the approbation of his conscience, and in the hope of eternal life."

"We shall love to think of father Vaill, as we do of holy men of old, because he served God, and his generation faithfully, and has gone to heaven, as we have the best reasons for believing. I hope you will succeed in presenting his true character. Yours in the Gospel,

DAVID D. FIELD."

From the Rev. Mr. Swift, of Killingworth.

"My Dear Brother Parsons: — I am in favor of the publication of a memoir of Rev. Joseph Vaill, yet I can suggest nothing but what must already be familiar to one, who has been so long, and so intimately acquainted, as you have been with that dear servant of the Lord. I had no particular acquaintance with him, till he removed to this place, and then as you are well aware, his faculties were considerably impaired. He however, often preached to my people, to great acceptance, and always without notes. I was always struck when hearing him, with the plain, faithful, undisguised open hearted manner, in which he delivered his message. His knowledge of his own heart, of its desperate wickedness, I have thought was very striking and uncommon. This often threw a gloom about him, and not unfrequently occasioned depression of spirits and distressing fears of death. He was to the last, warmly attached to the great distinguishing doctrines of grace, and seemed to derive from the contemplation of them, his sweetest consolations. He no doubt had his faults. Sometimes perhaps he indulged his natural propensity to wit and humor too much, and sometimes was too free and open in his remarks upon the foibles of others.

This no doubt arose from his frank and open hearted disposition, and not from unkindness. I am glad you have it in contemplation, to prepare a memoir of this our beloved father.

I remain your affectionate brother in Christ,

E. G. SWIFT."

Killingworth, Feb. 23d, 1839.

The reader has now before him a sketch of the character, and life of this humble and devoted servant of Christ. Fidelity to his Lord and Master, in all the varied relations of life, constitutes the leading and predominant trait in his character. It is this which has secured for him the testimony of the consciences of all who knew him, whether friends or foes, whether agreeing with him in sentiment or differing from him. All will say they regarded him as a good man, and a faithful minister.

The grace of God enabled him to be what he was, and through the power of God's grace, during a long life, he was sustained under many discouragements and embarrassments, and in circumstances by no means enviable to men of the world. What he was in his private character as a Christian, other Christians in the ordinary walks of life may become. So far as he followed Christ, others may copy his example. The same religion, which shed so much kind-

ness and goodness and honest frankness, and holy diligence around him, in the relations and transactions, and friendship of private life, may be made to appear equally lovely in common Christians, provided they will suffer the principles of the Gospel to reign in their hearts, and govern their purposes, and form their rules of life.

And as a minister of the Gospel, his honesty of heart and purpose, his open frankness and freedom from guile, his indefatigable labors, his firm adherence to his course of duty, under all possible discouragements, his persevering and warm attachment to the great truths of the Gospel, his plain and faithful preaching, his fearless exposure of vice, and plain reproof of the wicked, commend him as an example to ministers of this age, worthy of their consideration.

Young men likewise of hopeful piety, who are looking forward to the Christian ministry, and who find themselves without the means of defraying the expenses of their education, may be encouraged from the example here afforded them, to feel, that their own efforts, with the blessing of God, will enable them to achieve the object aimed at. They, who rely on their own efforts under God, who from early life, are obliged, and are willing to make sacrifices, and endure hardships, and help themselves in acquir-

ing an education, with a view to be useful in the world, are the men from whom the Church may expect much. There is an early training in such men, that qualifies them to *endure hardness* as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and to fight manfully the *good fight of faith.*

In closing this memoir, it is natural to ask how it will be received. What effect will it have upon him who reads it? There is responsibility resting on the reader, as well as the compiler. The subject has gone to his reward, he *rests from his labors*, and his *works do follow him.* How shall the compiler, and the reader, be benefitted? Pious example rightly improved, will allure the living in the way of holiness. And to what end has this memoir fallen into the hands of the reader? Shall it be read in vain; or shall it be the means of his spiritual improvement? Let every reader ask himself whether he is following Christ, and whether he is stimulated to greater activity and consistency in duty, by the example of Christian and ministerial fidelity, contained in this volume.

ERRATA.

Page 24, 12th line, for *beach*, read *bark*. Page 105, 1st line, omit quotation. Page 121, 17th line, for *efforts*, read *effects*. Page 143, 12th line, for *this*, read *their*. Page 154, 26th line, insert *and* after surfeiting. Do. 27th line, for *xxii*, read *xxi*. Page 169, 2d line, insert *new* before settlements. Page 176, 14th line, for *seven* read *several*. Page 219, 19th line, for *he*, read *we*.